

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE: CONNECTING WOMEN IN MINISTRY  
THROUGH MENTORING, NETWORKING AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION  
AT SAINT PAUL'S BAPTIST CHURCH

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## CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
DEDICATION.....	viii
ABBREVIATIONS .....	ix
EPIGRAPH.....	x
INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHAPTER	
1. MINISTRY FOCUS .....	6
2. BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS.....	23
3. HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS .....	63
4. THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS.....	87
5. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS.....	111
6. PROJECT ANALYSIS.....	133
APPENDIX	
A. SYMPOSIUM FLYER: WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE	162
B. THE ESSENTIALS OF A PRAYER LIFE .....	164
C. ONE SYSTEM CARE RETREAT.....	167
D. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RETREAT.....	169

E.	WILLS, TRUST, INSURANCE, MEDICAL & FINANCE SEMINAR	171
F.	PRE TEST SURVEY .....	174
G.	POST TEST SURVEY .....	178
H.	PRE TEST SURVEY RESULTS .....	182
I.	POST TEST SURVEY RESULTS .....	185
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....		188

## **ABSTRACT**

### **WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE: CONNECTING WOMEN IN MINISTRY THROUGH MENTORING, NETWORKING AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION AT SAINT PAUL'S BAPTIST CHURCH**

by  
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United Theological Seminary, 2016

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This project will address the women's population that is not united, nurtured, mentored, trained, or empowered at Saint Paul's Baptist Church. To address this problem, this project model will consist of a series of symposiums meeting the unique needs of women serving in ministry. These informative sessions will empower, acknowledge and address the issues pertaining to women. It will assist women in moving forward from a place of stagnation and complacency to a place of liberation. This model will utilize the mixed methods research design utilizing pre- and post-surveys to measure the project's outcome.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to acknowledge and thank God; he is the keeper of my soul. Truly this endeavor would not be possible without the Trinity. To the United Theological Seminary staff: thank you for your assistance on this journey. Without your kindness and dedication to your work, I could have mistakenly attended the wrong seminary. Yet, I knew from the moment I met you all that I was in a seminary that care for and nurture people from all walks of life. Thank you Dr. Harold Hudson for your guidance and genuine love for people. I thank my Saint Paul's Baptist Church family that assisted me and showed me kindness, love, care and respect. There were many at the church that assisted me, and I could not possibly name them all without leaving someone out. To the William Smith Morton Library staff at the Union Presbyterian Seminary: thank you for your assistance and a private carrel to utilize. You made an unbelievable difference in the quality of my research.

A journey of this complexity, challenges and enormous undertaking could not be possible without the dedication, love, coaching and expertise of some extraordinary praying men of God: my mentors Rev. Dr. Kenneth Cummings and Dr. Robert Walker. Words cannot adequately express my gratitude for your guidance and loyalty to my ministry and well-being. Thank you for embracing my thoughts and ideas. Moreover, thank you for allowing me into the sacred parts of your life and welcoming me into your family.

A special thanks to my editor, Rev. Dr. Kenneth Cummings. Your dedication to seeing my work through has been invaluable. Thank you for availing yourself to the process, attention to details, the many long hours, endless emails, text messages, phone calls, encouraging words and your patience. Thank you for your example of humility. I look forward to working with you on future projects.

To the Prophetic Preaching and Praxis peer group, my extended family and friends: thank you. We were led by our mentors to start each focus group with prayer, worship and sharing; for this I am forever grateful. Thank you for sharing your pain, fears, and concerns with me. Your presence on this journey made the difference in my strength when I felt weak and lost. Each of you has made a difference in my life, and for this I am grateful.

Finally, I thank my family and friends. Thank you for crying with me, praying for me and encouraging me. To my baby sister Hope Sheffield and dear friends Dr. Lavern Wilson and Dr. Mary Young: thanks for being there at a pivotal time on this journey. I adore and appreciate each of you.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this doctoral thesis to my daughter Demika, my grandson Quentin and my mom Janester. You give me a reason to live life to the fullest. Thank you for all that you do to allow me to soar.



## **ABBREVIATIONS**

SPBC	SAINT PAUL’S BAPTIST CHURCH
NRSV	NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION
NIV	NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But people will never forget how you made them feel.

—Maya Angelou, *Worth Repeating: More Than 5,00 Classic and Contemporary Quotes*.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In this doctoral thesis, the introduction seeks to present the reader with pertinent information and a very critical need for churches to empower, mentor and nurture women serving in ministry. Saint Paul's Baptist Church is the largest predominantly African American Baptist Church in the metropolitan area of Richmond, Virginia, and is the place of context for this project.

Chapter one defines the ministry and project focus. It examines my personal spiritual autobiography, dual contextual analysis and synergy. In the spiritual autobiography, the reader is drawn into the personal spiritual journey of the writer along with her passions, gifts and graces of ministry. The reader will examine the author's personal exploration of her life and a moment of sudden inspiration and revelation when she discovers God is calling her to do more in ministry in an area she has not explored before. In addition, the dual contextual analysis is examined. One can easily glean the integration and correlations of the autobiography and the contextual analysis in the synergy. The synergy continues with identifying a present and pressing need in the context in which this author was spiritually fed and disciplined in the Baptist church. The project model is birthed from the integration of the disciplines mentioned and is entitled the Women's Empowerment Initiative: Connecting Women through Mentoring, Networking and Spiritual Formation at Saint Paul's Baptist Church.

Chapter two addresses the Biblical Foundation that undergirds my thesis in reference to empowering women serving in ministry. This unit examines the historical, social, cultural and political context of the Old Testament text, Esther 4:1-17. The book of Esther has parallels to women serving in church in a male dominated court/church. Women serving in ministry are often faced with trials and challenges routinely due to gender and the patriarchal history of the church. Esther was faced with the challenges of having faith in God as she served people in need in a system dominated by men in a correlating connection in reference to women serving in ministry in the twenty-first century. The book of Esther examines a woman positioned to acknowledge her challenges and examines her purpose for existing. Esther found the courage through prayer, fasting and acknowledgement from her uncle Mordecai to make a decision to improve her community as she held on to her faith in God. The book of Esther motivated me to move from a place of comfort to a place of motivating other women to move forward with their gifts and passions. This section also examines the New Testament text Acts 9:32-33, 36-40. The text examines the service of Dorcas (Tabitha), the unsung heroic woman serving in ministry. Her story parallels women serving in ministry across the world without their presence being acknowledged and without recognition for their service to the church. The unsung “sheroes” are women serving in the church in a selfless manner. Dorcas is an example of one who serves simply to meet the needs of the people due to her love for God. Yet, she became sick and died. One could speculate she died too soon while serving others and perhaps without mentoring and nurturing from the church. Dorcas in the book of Acts parallels women serving in the church today, perhaps dying a slow and silent death in service on the vine to God because they are not nurtured,

mentored and supported in the church. In addition, this chapter examines the literary features and religious themes of scriptures mentioned.

Chapter three provides the Historical Foundation which are characteristics of the research paper. It examines a comprehensive research of the history of women in religion, female societies and religious orders, comparative history, sacred texts, contemporary issues, and women's rights and the ordination of women. In addition, this sections examines the history of women to include the Progressive Era, Nineteenth Century, Twentieth Century Women's Suffrage, and the Twenty First Century. The research of the eras mentioned reveals the issues facing women in religions across the spectrum of faiths. Unfortunately, not much has changed since the beginning of the history of religion. Across the following faiths researched, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism and many other religions, this author easily gleaned that women are facing many of the same issues. Moreover, it appears routinely and indiscriminately that women's gifts and skills are utilized in religious societies in a domesticated role as a woman would serve in her home. It is important to note as well the research revealed some progress of the role of women in religious orders over the different eras researched. Women are utilizing their education, gifts and skills to crack the glass ceiling of a patriarch system in religion, and the men are slowly beginning to notice the value of women leadership in the church in some sectors.

Chapter four examines the Theological Foundation of the research paper. It explores the different aspects of theology. This chapter gives an in-depth examination of classical theology, the Trinity, the theology of a thirteenth century theologian Thomas Aquinas and a German reformer, Martin Luther. In addition, this sections examines and

explores Feminist Theology and Liberation Theology, inclusive of Womanist, Womanism and Womanish Theology, along with Practical Theology. Chapter four would not be complete without the mention of the early nineteenth-century African American female religious leaders. Women ministers, who often labored diligently and served as traveling evangelist, are mentioned in this section. Sojourner Truth's oratory led the way to nineteenth century female leaders such as Maria Stewart, Jarena Lee, Zilpha Elaw, Sarah Ann Hines, Vashti Murphy McKenzie, and Katie Cannon. This chapter shares another liberator of women as the only begotten son, Jesus. Research here reveals the tenacity and abilities of women who were forerunners and game changes in tumultuous and difficult times while answering the call of God to serve in ministry.

Chapter five examines the Theoretical Foundation of the research paper. In this chapter, models of ministry are described; contemporary discipline themes are interwoven into this section. The models of ministry range from traditional models (mainline, evangelical and charismatic) to Saint Paul's Baptist Church's mega-church model (cell based), Willow Creek model (seeker target), and the Saddleback model (purpose driven). The histories of American women are discussed in varied disciplines. The disciplines discussed are the following: Psychology of Women, Women Scientist and Engineers, and Women in Education. In addition, the struggles and joys of women are discussed throughout this chapter. Toward the end of chapter five, it was significant for me to share the extraordinary work of Emma Hart Willard (1787-1870), Prudence Crandall (1803-1890), and Mary McLeod Bethune (1875-1955).

Chapter six is an integration of this author's foundational papers, methodology, project implementation, summary of learning and is inclusive of my project analysis. It

also exemplifies how these narratives impact my hypothesis proposed for my context of ministry. It will address the reasoning behind choosing the described methodology approach utilized to gather data and the actual implementation of the proposed project. It further intersects and leads to the praxis and implementation of the project “The Women’s Empowerment Initiative: Connecting Women in Ministry Through Mentoring, Networking, and Spiritual Formation at Saint Paul’s Baptist Church.” In addition, this chapter will be inclusive of whether the hypothesis was supported or negated. Moreover, this chapter suggests improvements for future projects and recommendations for further research.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **MINISTRY FOCUS**

This paper provides viable information and an integration of my spiritual autobiography and dual contextual analysis. This synergy paper seeks to reveal certain specifics about my life pertaining to my calling, faith development, gifts and passion for ministry wedded to my present context wherein I see certain aspects that need addressing. In addition, this document will explore the needs of women in my present context and propose a project to avail resources, raise awareness and assist the women serving in ministry needs. Bringing the light of God's word to such a specific area, I will propose a doctoral project entitled "Women's Empowerment Initiative: Connecting Women in Ministry Through Mentoring, Networking, and Spiritual Formation at Saint Paul's Baptist Church."

#### **Summary of Spiritual Autobiography**

My name is Mary Elizabeth Briggs-Cosby. I was reared in the metropolitan city of Richmond, Virginia. My parents are Janester Victoria Briggs and the late John Gilbert Briggs. I am the fourth child of five children born from their union of marriage. I was born and reared in Gilpin Court, a housing project that is still in existence in Richmond, Virginia. My mother and father separated when I was approximately five or six years old.



I am a licensed and ordained minister at Saint Paul's Baptist Church (SPBC) in Richmond, Virginia. I have been a member of SPBC for twenty-nine years under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. Lance D. Watson. I have served in many different capacities in ministry throughout the church. However, in the last twelve years, I have served in the capacity of a minister. My education consists of and is not limited to the following degrees: Master of Divinity (M.Div.) from the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University, Master of Science (M.S.) from the Medical College of Virginia Commonwealth University and a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) from Virginia Commonwealth University. I have matriculated in the following field of study: Master of Divinity in Religion, M.S. in Counseling with a concentration in substance abuse counseling, and the B.S. in the field of Criminal Justice.

My professional work experience is inclusive, yet it is not limited, to the field of criminal justice. I have served and worked in the field of criminal justice for twenty-three years with security clearances in the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) and the Virginia State Police. During my twenty-three years in the field of criminal justice, I have held the following positions: Human Rights Advocate, Probation Officer, Substance Abuse Counselor and a Supervisor of Treatment (inclusive of but not limited to the supervision of inmates and staff). My work experience is also inclusive of the field of higher education at the community college and state university. I have worked as part of the adjunct faculty at the following community colleges and programs: J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, ITT Technical Institute, and the Henrico County Court Alternative Program. I also served and worked part-time as a classroom assistant for the Samuel Dewitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University.

I am currently employed full-time and serve as the first African American female chaplain at Central State Hospital in Petersburg, Virginia. I have served as a chaplain for Central State Hospital in the forensic and civil wards for five years. As a chaplain, I have the wonderful opportunity to serve and work with the incarcerated population (I enjoy helping) in a mental health setting versus the penitentiary setting. I have the wonderful and exciting opportunity to work with the incarcerated population from a spiritual perspective of bondage instead of the physical bondage of bars in a correctional setting. My profession as a chaplain provides the opportunity for me to work with the mentally ill patients which are “Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity” (NGRI) and patients that are not mentally ill and are “Restored to Competency” and returned to the jail for a courtroom hearing. In addition, as a chaplain my job description consist of the following duties: develop, coordinate, implement and facilitate ten weekly Spiritual Care groups, provide three church services on Sundays, encourage, empower, counsel and help patients and staff pursue their spiritual awareness. Sunday morning worship services are inclusive but not limited to preaching, communion and prayer services.

### **Passions, Gifts and Graces of Ministry**

I believe God has given me the gifts of compassion, teaching and preaching to serve his created people. The gift of compassion often leads me to uncomfortable places in the lives of others. People tend to share with me details of their lives that they do not share with others. I am often surprised at the things strangers share with me. I often search my spirit and ask God as they are speaking to give me something to share with them. I want to share God’s word as a comfort instead of my thoughts and experiences. I

believe this gift of compassion has allowed me to work with difficult and irate people in the world and particularly in the field of corrections. I have been angry and frustrated in my professional, spiritual and economic status while on this journey of life. I know the struggles of being a woman in a male dominated career, in being an African American woman living in this world with the false pretense of some and in having humble beginnings. I believe God has equipped me with life experiences and through the opportunities of higher education to serve his people from different cultures in ministry. I am fully aware I cannot help everyone, and the fact remains that I am content in knowing I am not the Savior. Yet, I know God can use me in service every time I surrender my will to him. I am blessed to communicate from a philosophical point of view, as well as articulate in simplicity according to the needs of the population I am serving. I believe the gift of compassion has been an intricate part of my teaching, preaching and calling from God. If money was not needed for survival in this world, I would teach and preach for free all the time for the glory of God. I am concerned for and care about God's created people. This is inclusive of everyone because I believe we all are God's created people. By faith I believe God has used me in ministry and he still has work for me to do in ministry. This doctoral degree will enhance my skills and give me an opportunity to serve God's people effectively and in excellence.

### **Dual Context Analysis**

In reflection of the contextual paper, I have observed and noted a detailed dual contextual analysis of my context of ministry as a chaplain at Central State Hospital and as a licensed and ordained minister at SPBC. In my writings, I am intrigued with the

similarities and contrast of my dual context areas. In general, it is the people who make up the church. Therefore, ministry is pursued wherever there are people who are willing to worship and serve God. However, due to the sensitivity of the forensic units and the confidentiality of the population served at Central State Hospital, this context is not feasible for this assignment. In my observation, this mental health facility has the propensity of privacy and confidentiality issues according to the state laws of Virginia. Therefore, my focus and observations will be on my context of ministry at Saint Paul's Baptist Church (SPBC). SPBC is where I have been trained, spiritually fed the word of God and taught the process of ministry for twenty-nine years under the leadership of Reverend Dr. Lance D. Watson.

SPBC installed its fifth pastor in 1985, Reverend Dr. Lance D. Watson. Dr. Watson is the chief visionary and senior pastor of this church: "A Church for People on the Grow." Pastor Watson has prayerfully led the church from a building on church hill, to a high school in Richmond, to a multi-site church ministry with locations throughout the Richmond metropolitan area. SPBC is the spiritual home for over 11,000 members on approximately 400 acres of land in Henrico, Virginia. In November of 2002, the church moved into a newly constructed campus located on Creighton Road in the eastern area of Henrico County, Virginia. The church has 100,000 square footage, over forty classrooms, commons A, B and C (multi-purpose rooms), full service cafeteria serving brunch and dinner, Barnabas Counseling department, cathedral seating capacity of 3,000, chapel seating capacity of 300, media room and auxiliary spaces. The cathedral has a baptism pool and a waterfall behind the choir loft.

### **A Present and Pressing Need**

There is in my opinion a direct correlation between my challenges in ministry and the deficit in the non-existence of a woman's ministry addressing the needs of women at Saint Paul's Baptist Church (SPBC). After being a member of SPBC for twenty-nine years, I have experience the joys and challenges of a small church growth to a mega church. There are challenges of finances, programming, deficit of servants, numerous people to serve and disciple. God's grace and guidance has helped me to successfully navigate the storms and challenges of being a woman clergy in ministry at SPBC. I have not mastered the art of being a woman clergy in ministry to the contrary; however, I have the seminary training, skill set, connections, resources and mentors to assist me on my ministry journey.

In my research of the church and reflection from twenty-nine years of service, I am aware there is a unique population of servants that are not united, empowered and nurtured. This population, mentioned more specifically, are the women who are seeking candidacy/and or a place in ministry. There is a great deficit in the empowerment of women for ministry. Simply stated, aspiring women candidates for ministry need to be empowered, nurtured, taught, tutored, encourage and united in ministry at SPBC. Statistically, I have found in my research of Henrico County and SPBC that the women servants outnumber the men servants. As I reflect on the various ministries at SPBC with over 11,000 members, a women's ministry does not exist. Yet, the women, especially those in leadership, are present and serving in great numbers throughout the church. Some of the women are broken, exhausted, divided, disconnected, and conflicted compared to servants in other ministries. Yet, women at this church are amongst the

hardest working servants. It is important to state at this point in the paper SPBC allows and welcomes women to serve in any capacity they are interested and qualified to serve in.

To further substantiate my point, research of the history of this church revealed there were nine women and four men at the very first meeting to structure and implement the church. In my observation and opinion, the women are significant in the church and to God as revealed in his word. After all, the bible reveals it was the women that were at the empty tomb of the resurrected Christ. Luke 24:2 (NIV) reads, “. . . very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.”<sup>1</sup> These women in ministry were working at home preparing the spices and showed up early in the morning to serve the Son of God even at his grave. This particular passage of the bible reveals women in ministry working at home and in service for the progression of the gospel of Jesus the Christ. Moreover, the church continues to benefit from the employment of women, their unique gifts, organizational skills, talents, stewardship, seminary education and volunteer efforts. Yet, quite often the women are not nurtured, mentored, empowered, groomed, or taken under a brother’s wing for training or shown appreciation in the church.

It is a glaring reality at the time of writing this paper that in the same way women have been neglected in the church in a ministry dominated by men in leadership roles, my father neglected me. He neglected to nurture, train, guide, teach, empower, love, and take me under his wing as his daughter. He simply walked away from our home when my

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<sup>1</sup> Glo Bible, accessed on June 4, 2014, <https://www.globible.com>.

siblings and I were children. It is interesting and an overwhelming reality that I have found my life's work in a field dominated by men in corrections and now ministry. As I ponder my reality, I wonder if I were attracted to and excelled in the field of corrections and now ministry looking for the guidance, nurturing, training, recognition and empowerment that I did not receive from my father. In reality, there were many men along the way that taught me the ropes in corrections very early in my career, guided my career and protected me along the journey. I am thankful for the men and women of integrity that took the time to guide and support me. Many of them continue to be a resource for me as I live and travel this journey called life today.

It is possible in the process I have neglected some of my sisters. I have failed to tell them how God blessed me to survive poverty, higher education, working in a male dominated profession in the field of criminal justice, and as a woman in ministry in the church without degrading myself, and compromising my integrity. Wow, this is not an easy revelation to embrace as I develop and write this document. I remember as a probation officer transferring as many of my female perpetrator's cases as allowed because I felt I could not relate to them and did not want to be bothered with their issues. As I reflect now, I was probably too busy trying to find my place in my career, church and family. Please note this is not an excuse but a reality of the fact I did not want to be bothered because I was struggling to find my place in the world. I did not mistreat my sisters, but I believe I have inadvertently neglected to serve them in many ways.

Having served in various capacities in the church, pre-and post minister, I believe God has called me for a time such as this to empower women in the church. The progress of the ministry of God relies in the anointing and power of God funneled through a

population of dedicated men and women working together. This dedicated group of men and women should be nurtured, trained and directed toward a common goal of service to God through serving his people. Yet, the weakness in this church is the failure to apply Isaiah 61:1 to the women as well as the men in the church. A paraphrase of Isaiah 61:1 points out that God has declared freedom for the captives. I have had the opportunity to work in the field of corrections for over twenty-one years working with incarcerated people. The women at SPBC, per my observations, are incarcerated spiritually and physically. God has prophetically declared to the church to set the captives free according to his word. Once licensed and ordained, it appears most of the women in our church often leave to plant churches and/or develop ministries to give others what they did not receive in their discipleship at church.

### **Ministry Project Model**

The ministry project model will be inclusive of symposium sessions addressing the needs of women in ministry. The symposium will consist of different modules of self-help and informative sessions to encourage, inform and inspire women serving in ministry. This project model will engage women clergy as well as women serving in different capacities of ministry in the church to navigate and serve God with joy in ministry. This project model will aim to raise awareness and equip women with resources and tools to serve as whole and healthy women serving in the church. In addition, the symposiums will provide invaluable information to enable the women to live healthy balanced lives while serving God in ministry. Professionals from the following fields of study will be leaders and resources persons: healthcare, estate planning, insurance,



domestic violence, stewardship, medical directives, wills and trust documents, life insurance and the essential need for a vibrant prayer life. This proposed model will include educational forums in areas of economics, sociology, psychology and law. This project will seek to meet the needs of women serving in ministry where they are and equip them to nurture themselves as they serve God through serving his people. Simultaneously, the project seeks to help women help themselves, each other and extend beyond themselves to support the children's ministry. An optional monetary donation will be requested during the informative session to support a need (the children's ministry) beyond our own need. Luke 12:48 states, to “. . . From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded.”<sup>2</sup>

The focus of this model is to inform, discuss and address the issues pertinent to women serving in ministry. The informative sessions will give women a safe and open environment to engage in topics which are often experienced in silence: domestic violence. The symposiums will allow women to openly discuss the challenges facing them while serving in ministry. There will be an opportunity for the women to ask questions and share concerns relevant to the topic matter.

The Women's Empowerment Initiative: Connecting Women in Ministry Through Mentoring, Networking, and Spiritual Formation at Saint Paul's Baptist Church model will provide the praxis for the project. Its goal is to raise awareness and equip women with the resources needed through informative sessions. Each modular of the title has a mentoring aspect and prophetically speaks to the praxis as ascertained below:

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<sup>2</sup> Luke 12:48, NRSV.

### *Mentoring*

The mentoring process is two-fold. I will serve women in the role of a mentor/facilitator and connect them to resources (i.e. women conferences, etc.) throughout this process of awareness and equipping them in service. In the praxis process they will engage in dialogue and gain the skill set to mentor someone else.

### *Networking*

The women will be encouraged to share their gifts and talents with one another. This project modular will seek to encourage the women to form a bond and connect later through LinkedIn or another form of social media as an ongoing resource for one another. The ladies could possibly publish a resource booklet or form a sister connection group once equipped with information in reference to networking.

### *Spiritual Formation/ Psychological Perspective*

This modular will facilitate the essentials of prayer and the collaboration of the body, mind and soul from a psychological perspective. Often a woman serving in ministry is involved in the spiritual side of her persona and often neglects her psychological needs, self-esteem and self-worth. Our misunderstanding of the bible can also overshadow and or lead us to neglect ourselves while serving in ministry. Unfortunately, low self-esteem and misunderstandings can lead women to attach their self-worth to someone or something. The spiritual side of us often becomes a façade. In addition, the essentials of stewardship will be discussed and explored. A caveat of the stewardship session will be to give a monetary donation to the children's ministry. The

monetary donation is a part of being good stewards of what we have and giving back to assist the next generations of servants. These subjects will be examined to assist in a balance lifestyle for women servicing in ministry. As this model project is tweaked and fine-tuned, the topics could possibly vary, yet will be implemented with the same purpose of raising awareness and equipping clergywomen and women serving in different roles in ministry.

Often women are serving God with their gifts and talents endlessly at the church while simultaneously serving their families and vocations as well. Woman servants often tend to serve God through the church, family and friends while neglecting their own lives. Frequently, women in ministry outlive their spouses and find themselves left without the knowledge of what to do to sustain life spiritually and physically. In a situation such as this, her husband was the head of the household and took care of the mortgage, finances and living arrangements. A woman who finds herself in a unique situation such as a widow rarely can get the information needed to assist her at the church where she is serving God in ministry. The church is not addressing this issue and other issues which are unique to women in ministry. The church is often considered to be a hospital where the people of God come to lay their burdens down. Women are often the unsung servants due to the unique makeup of the church and lack of resources, empowerment and leadership opportunities. Often women servants will find themselves serving with a smile, yet on the inside they are serving with exhausted and empty hearts. In addition, women clergy are serving the church yet neglecting their health, finances, and failing to get the necessary help to deal with the difficult ironies of life.

Frequently, women servants are in need of viable ministries that are a prophetic voice speaking to them, valuing, empowering and propelling them to move forward with their unique call to serve God. Women clergy often feel oppressed because they are not allowed to utilize their gifts in ministry. Exposing women to this model of ministry, “The Women’s Empowerment Initiative” will empower them to do more in ministry while maintaining a healthy and balanced life style. There is a need to enhance their knowledge and raise their awareness to better equip them to serve God and others as well as themselves. Often, women serving in the church receive a plethora of teachings on spiritual awareness, yet they lack the basic information essential to survive service in ministry. Women tend to over invest in their spirituality while neglecting their personal lives. Yet, the church where they receive their spiritual food is not investing in their personal survival in a way which is unique to a woman serving in ministry.

I believe my diverse experiences in the field of corrections, educational background and ministerial experiences, while being uniquely female, will enhance my progress and implementation of the project model. In addition, serving at Saint Paul’s Baptist Church and pursuing a Doctor of Ministry degree has afforded me an opportunity give back to women in ministry. My career in the field of criminal justice has given me the tenacity, self-discipline and the capacity to work with people from vast cultures and genders. It has allowed me to work with broken individuals on a quest to be whole. These skill sets, experiences and my education are applicable and can be utilize for the empowerment of women in the church setting.

There is a skill set needed in addition to checks and balances and a willingness to grow in leadership and discipleship, to withstand the challenges as a woman in ministry,

which are unique to women. Women can and many are serving in ministry with excellence and integrity in a male dominant environment. Serving in excellence and integrity can be gleaned through mentoring and exposure to training and informative sessions uniquely designed for women. Women can find their niche in ministry, grow and serve God with great joy and ultimately be and feel whole with the proper training, skills and tools. In addition, my educational background, inclusive of, yet not limited to the field of criminal justice, substance abuse counseling and ministry, can be utilized to assist the women and connect them to resources pertaining to personal challenges which has a pertinent impact on their service in ministry. Most women are genetically predisposition to being a nurturer. In light of this, many women tend to take on the world in their personal and ministry life. The magnitude of woes can leave a woman overly extended in her professional, personal and ministry life. My educational skill set can be utilized to connect the women to resources to live a well-balanced life.

### **Hypothesis**

On any given Sunday morning church service, women by far outnumber the men. Statistically speaking, according to a recent website, “U. S. Congregations,” the United States congregation has an adult crowd that is typically sixty-one percent female and thirty-nine percent male.<sup>3</sup> This gender gap is inclusive of all age categories.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, American churches on Sunday mornings reflect 13 million more adult

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<sup>3</sup> “U. S. Congregations,” accessed August 23, 2015, <http://www.uscongregations.org/blog/2014/02/17/what-are-the-major-challenges-that-u-s-congregations-face>.

<sup>4</sup> “U. S. Congregations.”

women than men.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, my context at Saint Paul's Baptist Church is not unique in its history of men being out numbered in the church as compared to women in attendance.

Firstly, I propose the following hypothesis: church ministry suffers and is ineffective when women serving in ministry are not nurtured, mentored and empowered and equipped in areas unique to them. Consequently, the women serving in ministry often become irate, disengaged, disfranchised, and divided while serving in ministry due to the church's failure to recognize their strengths and needs that are unique to women. Unfortunately, in a church environment such as this, a woman's ministry gifts can remain dormant and women often suffer the consequences in silence. I propose a series of symposiums meeting the unique needs of women serving in ministry.

Secondly, I propose a series of informative sessions which will assist the women in moving them forward from a place of stagnation and complacency to a place of liberation and progression. The Women's Empowerment Initiative: Connecting Women in Ministry Through Mentoring, Networking, and Spiritual Formation at Saint Paul's Baptist Church project model will seek to ultimately raise the awareness, equip, empower, connect and mentor women clergy and women serving in different aspects of ministry in the church.

Thirdly, I propose that after the series symposiums women will start the journey of ministry with a new joy and eternal purpose as they serve God through service to his people.

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<sup>5</sup> "U. S. Congregations."

Fourthly, I propose the expected results of this model will propel women to move forward in utilizing their God given gifts and walk away with a new zeal for serving in ministry.

Fifthly, moreover, it is proposed the results of this model will yield a host of engaged, focused, informed, confident, healthy, productive and balanced women excited to serve God with their gifts.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, I do not blame any one person at church for the ills of society and the problems of the community. However, it is a reality that SPBC does not have a women's ministry and the women are at odds with each other and moreover are dying a spiritual death in service to the Lord. There is need for The Women's Empowerment Initiative: Connecting Women in Ministry Through Mentoring, Networking, and Spiritual Formation at Saint Paul's Baptist Church to address the needs of women in ministry.

I am concerned and care about God's created people. This is inclusive of everyone because I believe we all are God's created people. By faith, I believe God will use my gifts, talents, failures and successes to assist women serving in ministry. This doctoral project will enhance my skills and give me an opportunity to serve God's people more effectively and in excellence. This proposed project will aid women in their development as women, teach them, connect them to systems of empowerment and support and enable them to pass on viable information to other women. Women in ministry needs will be addressed in partnership with the experts in the community. I

believe this is the ministry God has led me to implement throughout the doctoral process at this time in the program.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS**

#### **Introduction**

I envision and propose implementing a ministry project entitled “The Women’s Empowerment Initiative: Connecting Women in Ministry through Mentoring, Networking and Spiritual Formation at Saint Paul’s Baptist Church.” The Old Testament foundational scripture for this project is Esther 4:1-17. This project proposal will aid women in their unique calling as women in ministry, equip them with techniques/skills, and connect them to systems and resources which will empower and support them in ministry. The women will be empowered to share viable information and utilize it to assist other women. Women’s issues in ministry will be addressed in partnership with the experts in the community in a variety of informative plenary sessions and support groups. In addition, this project will raise the women’s awareness and teach them to seek help for themselves as they serve others in ministry.

In reality, women in ministry and particularly in leadership roles as minister, have parallels to Esther in being in a male dominant court/church environment. Women are serving in an environment with the possibility of danger lurking in the form of trials, low self-esteem and challenges unique to women in ministry. Therefore, the book of Esther is key in the project proposed to help women in ministry face the challenges and examine their purpose for existing. It is one thing to make a decision to improve our surroundings

and another to act and move forward with making the necessary improvements. The book of Esther, at one point, motivates an individual to move beyond pondering a situation to action to improve the situation. The book of Esther exemplifies the project proposed to move women beyond themselves to help others while trusting in a hidden God.

In my research of the church and reflection from twenty-seven years of service, I am aware that there is a unique population of servants that are not united, empowered and nurtured. This population, more specifically, are the women who are seeking candidacy and/or a place in church while serving in their calling of ministry. There is a great deficit in the empowerment of women for ministry at my church, St. Paul's Baptist Church (which will be referred to from this point as SPBC). Simply stated, aspiring women candidates for ministry need to be empowered, nurtured, taught, mentored, encouraged and united in ministry at SPBC.

### **Historical, Social, Cultural and Political Context: Esther 4:1-17**

There are several versions and translations of the book of Esther. The Masoretic Text (MT) is a Hebrew version, and the Septuagint (LXX) is the Greek version translated to Hebrew and the Alpha Text (AT).<sup>1</sup> The Greek Septuagint (LXX) Hebrew translation differs in which it has six passages, totaling 107 verses that are not found in the Masoretic Hebrew version of Esther.<sup>2</sup> Both Protestants and Jews regard the Masoretic Hebrew version of Esther as canonical. The MT Hebrew version has been passed down by the rabbis of their faith communities. Roman Catholic, Christians and Eastern

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<sup>1</sup> Carol M. Bechtel, *Esther*, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2002), 2.

<sup>2</sup> Bechtel, *Esther*, 1.

Orthodox regard the Greek Septuagint (LXX) as canonical.<sup>3</sup> The Alpha Text is also a Greek translation similar to the original Hebrew source of the MT. The striking differences in the Alpha Text indicate the writing was completed by a different author and/or redactor.<sup>4</sup> Among the many conspicuous differences, Purim is never mentioned in the text and God is mentioned quite explicitly.<sup>5</sup>

The book of Esther unveils during the period of approximately 486-465 BC. It is suggested by scholars that the dates of authorship range from the early fifth century B.C. to as late as the Maccabean period (second to first centuries B.C.). The setting of the story is inclusive of the reign of the Persian King Ahasuerus (Xerxes I), who ruled from 486-465 before the Christian era (B.C.E). The book of Esther records one period of King Ahasuerus' reign. King Ahasuerus ruled over one hundred and twenty- seven provinces from India to Ethiopia. His throne sat in the citadel of Susa in present-day north-western Iran, 180 miles east of ancient Babylon. The location of King Ahasuerus served as his winter capital and the location of his luxurious banquet during the third year of his reign. It was during this time in history the king gave a banquet for his ministers, officials, Persian army, nobles and governors to display his great wealth of his kingdom. The banquet lasted for 180 days with a great display of his majesty, splendor and pomp and circumstance.

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<sup>3</sup> Bechtel, *Esther*, 2.

<sup>4</sup> Sidnie White Crawford, "Esther," "Texts and Versions," in *The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary In Twelve Volumes*, vol. 3, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), 860-861.

<sup>5</sup> Crawford, "Esther," 860.

The book of Esther tells the story of two pertinent Jewish people, Queen Esther and Mordecai, which displayed wisdom and courage to prevent the annihilation of their people. Through their courageous behavior and reaction in distraught times, they were successful in thwarting the genocidal scheme of the Jewish enemy, Haman. Purim, a new Jewish festival, was inaugurated due to the ensuing victory celebration on the fourteenth and fifteenth of the month of Adar (February-March).<sup>6</sup> Purim is the celebration of the Jewish festival in commemoration of the deliverance of the Jews in Persia from destruction by Haman. Purim is celebrated traditionally in the morning and evening with a reading aloud of the entire book of Esther, inclusive of the last five festal scrolls (Megillot) in the Hebrew Bible. The Megillot is inclusive of the following books: Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther.<sup>7</sup>

Mordecai is the cousin (or uncle) of Hadassah, which is the Hebrew name for Esther (Esther 2:7). Mordecai had reared her as his child when her parents died. Mordecai is a Jew from the Benjamin tribe taken into exile from Jerusalem by King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, prior to the story of Esther (Esther 2:7). Esther and Mordecai, therefore, were a part of the Jewish Diaspora community in Persia in which the story originates. Their disparity and triumph with the omnipotent God's intervention is where the focus of this story unveils. The book of Esther, which reveals God's timing, protection and intervention to save the Jews from annihilation, is evident throughout the events that unfold. However, the book of Esther is the only book in the Hebrew Bible that

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<sup>6</sup> Chabad.org, "What-is-Purim?," accessed October 27, 2015, <http://www.chabad.org./holidays/purim/articlecdo/aid/645309/jewish.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> Crawford, "Esther," 855.

does not mention God's name.<sup>8</sup> While the story never mentions God by name, God's hand of protection can be detected in the timing and combination of events as they unfold. The book features numerous banquets, including two hosted by Xeres at the beginning, two given by Esther in the middle, and two celebrated by the Jews at the end. Since this story was told to later generations during the feast of Purim itself, the audience is placed right in the middle of the action. Those who read it cannot only join in celebrating God's deliverance, they can ask themselves, as Mordecai asked Esther, for what great purpose God may have brought them to their own position in life.

### **Literary Form**

The genre of the book of Esther is written in a literary form. It is the custom of the Jewish Rabbi during the Festival of Purim to read the scroll of Esther aloud publicly. The genre of the book of Esther is often referred to as an "early Jewish novella,"<sup>9</sup> a story that is longer than a short story, however, shorter than a novel. The book of Esther's genre is described as a literary work of fiction with a single, yet complex, plot and structure. This literary work has a distinct, clear beginning, middle and end. The book of Esther displays actions and reactions among the main characters within a specific length of time. As a novella, the book of Esther is literature that is read in public during the Festival of Purim as required of the Rabbi.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> David S. Dockery, "Esther," in *Holman Concise Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 191.

<sup>9</sup> Crawford, "Esther," 856.

<sup>10</sup> Crawford, "Esther," 856.

The structure of the literary work is written in an ordinary form without metrical and/or rhythmic structure. This literary work has a sense of symmetry, equilibrium and several structuring elements.<sup>11</sup> The use of banquets in the book of Esther tends to form an elaborate use of structuring. In the Hebrew version, the word banquet is translated as *mištech* with forty-six occurrences.<sup>12</sup> The banquets occur in pairs. Each pair compliments or opposes the other. Also, one banquet can belong to more than one pair. The following indicates the types of banquets found in the book of Esther<sup>13</sup>:

- Xerxes banquet for the nobility: 1:2
- Xerxes banquet for all the men in Susa: 1:5-8
- Vashti's banquet for the woman: 1:9
- Esther's enthronement banquet: 2:18
- Haman and Xerxes banquet: 3:15
- Esther's first banquet: 5:4-8
- Esther's second banquet: 7:1-9
- The Jews feasting in celebration of Mordecai's glory and the counter decree: 8:17
- The first feast of Purim: Adar 14: 9:17, 19
- The second feast of Purim: Adar 15: 9:18

It is important to note the first two and the last two banquets form a set. As an example, banquets number one and nine extends an invitation to the entire empire while banquets two and ten extends an invitation to the inhabitants of Susa.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, there are banquets, which form a pair, such as banquet two for the men and banquet three for

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<sup>11</sup> Crawford, "Esther," 856.

<sup>12</sup> Linda M. Day, *Esther*, Abingdon OT Commentaries (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2005), 8.

<sup>13</sup> Crawford, "Esther," 856.

<sup>14</sup> Crawford, "Esther," 857.

the women. The banquets, which form an oppositional pair, are banquet three given by Vashti and banquet four given for Esther. Another structuring element occurs among the main characters. The women and men occur in the following pairs of three: Ahasuerus and Vashti, Esther and Mordecai and Haman and Zeresh. It is important to note the protagonists are displayed in groups of two, which revolve around King Ahasuerus. The pairs are: Ester-Mordecai, Mordecai-Haman, Haman-Esther and lastly Esther-Mordecai.<sup>15</sup> There is a clear protagonist displayed in pairs showing a clear progression and symmetry structure. A distinctive feature of this literary composition is the progression of pairs throughout the book of Esther. The pair's motif recurs as follow: two groups of seven servants and nobles (1:10, 14); two eunuchs (2:8-9; 7:9); two meetings of Haman and Zeresh (5:10-14; 6:13); two decrees (3:12-14; 8:9-14), and the celebration of Purim consist of two days (9:21).<sup>16</sup> The motif pairs are also displayed in the major theme of the book of Esther as a reversal peripetry. The peripetry reveals a distinct change of events in which the expected outcome is reversed throughout the book of Esther. The following characters status and or events undergo a vast change listed below:

1. Vashti is queen and then she is banished from the title and kingdom.
2. Esther changes from a young, naive orphan to an empowered and powerful queen.
3. Haman verbally and physically plot to destroy his enemy and is forced to honor his enemy.
4. Haman is hanged on the same gallows he prepared for his enemy.

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<sup>15</sup> Crawford, "Esther," 857.

<sup>16</sup> Crawford, "Esther," 857.

5. Mordecai becomes a vizier in place of Haman.

6. The Jews move from a period of mourning to rejoicing.<sup>17</sup>

The reversal of the expected outcomes in the book of Esther is structured in such a way to signal pivotal moments throughout the plot. Esther's character change enables her to risk her life to save the Jewish people (4:15-17). Haman's honoring of Mordecai signals the beginning of his downfall as indicated by his wife Zeresh (6:13). In addition, Mordecai's promotion completes the salvation of the Jewish people (6:13). The distinct feature/motif of the theme allows the story to flow and gives it movement. The plot indicates changes in the novella; therefore, it is not stasis. The book of Esther is a message of God's divine power of hope and protection in the details of the lives of the Jewish people living in the Diaspora.

The prose written language of the book of Esther does not master the Hebrew language. It appears to have long lists and intricate details of palace procedures, banquet arrangements and the Persian postal system.<sup>18</sup> The prose is composed of an abundance of verbal dyads and repetitious language in the text. Some examples are "Ahasuerus, the same Ahasuerus" (1:1) and "to the governors over all the provinces and to the officials of all the peoples" (3:12).<sup>19</sup> The written language of the text appears to have nominal and verbal chains. The verbal and nominal chains occur several times in the text such as to destroy, to kill and to annihilate (3:13). In this novella, the features of the prose seem to

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<sup>17</sup> Crawford, "Esther," 857-858.

<sup>18</sup> Cary A. Moore, "Esther," (1971): AB 7B, quoted in Sidnie White Crawford, *Esther*, in *The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary In Twelve Volumes*, vol. 3, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), 858.

<sup>19</sup> Esther 1:1, 3:12 (New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha).



weigh down the text.<sup>20</sup> According to Jon Levenson, “this is not a matter of bad writing; instead, the author’s attempt to convey Persian officialese, the style of writing common to bureaucracies both ancient and modern.”<sup>21</sup> If this was a true story, which unveils in the Persian court, then the prose of Esther stands to be accurate. It appears the author uses exaggerated statements/hyperbole and an artistically form of literary form to describe the events of the Persian Empire.<sup>22</sup> The hyperboles/exaggerated statements that are found in 1:4 stating the banquet lasts for 180 days, and it exaggerates the detailed description of twelve-months’ beauty treatments prescribed for the women (2:12) and in the epilogue of the plot that describes the number of people slain by the Jew as 75,000 (9:16).

### **Detailed Analysis of the Text: Esther 4:1-17**

#### **4:1-3**

In Esther 4:1-3, Mordecai appears to be knowledgeable of the edit published in Susa initiated by his enemy, the protagonist Haman, in this literary work. Mordecai is grief stricken as described in the tearing of his clothes and the “traditional custom of mourning or humiliation by dressing in sackcloth.”<sup>23</sup> The Hebrew translation of sackcloth

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<sup>20</sup> Crawford, “Esther,” 857-858.

<sup>21</sup> Jon D. Levenson, “Esther,” (1997): 11, quoted in Sidnie White Crawford, *The New Interpreter’s Bible Commentary In Twelve Volumes*, vol. 3, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), 858.

<sup>22</sup> Crawford, “Esther,” 858.

<sup>23</sup> Stephen D. Renn, ed., “S,” *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Word Studies for Key English Bible Words Based on the Hebrew and Greek Texts* (Peabody MA: Hendrickson Publishing Inc., 2005), 843, s.v. “sackcloth.”

is *saq*, which is found in the Old Testament of the bible approximately forty times.<sup>24</sup> He wanders through the city wailing loudly giving a public display of his anguish and grief-stricken state of mind. The author does not state specifically if he is grief stricken because of his failure to bow down to Haman in the previous chapter or if he is guilt stricken because of the future imminent destruction/annihilation of the Jewish people. It is clear that his grief-stricken state causes him to wonder through the city and culminates at the entrance of the king's gate.

#### 4:4-8

In Esther 4:4-8, Queen Esther enters the scene of this literary work, and it appears her maids and eunuchs are aware she is related to Mordecai and she is Jewish. Yet, somehow her Jewish culture remains hidden from the king. Esther in this pericope is found to be distressed. The word distressed is “a rare noun occurring seven times in the Old Testament of the bible as distressed or anguish.”<sup>25</sup> The Hebrew word translation of distressed is “mesûqâh.”<sup>26</sup> Esther is distressed because of the news she received in reference to his grief-stricken state at the entrance of the king's gate. However, Esther is not aware of the specifics surrounding Mordecai's grief. There is a dichotomy between the events that transpire outside of the palace and the events inside the palace. This literary prose raises questions as to why she is sending Mordecai clothing. It does not indicate whether

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<sup>24</sup> Renn, *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, “S,” 843.

<sup>25</sup> Stephen D. Renn, ed., “D,” *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Word Studies for Key English Bible Words Based on the Hebrew and Greek Texts* (Peabody MA: Hendrickson Publishing Inc., 2005), 289, s.v. “distressed.”

<sup>26</sup> Renn, *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, “D,” 289.

she is sending clothes to change his mood, or if he is embarrassing her with his attire, or if she is afraid he may cause trouble for himself being dressed in sackcloth at the king's gate.<sup>27</sup> However, Esther is moved in her heart and actions to send him clothing. However, he refused the clothing. Esther appears to move seamlessly from a state of distress to a place of authority in ability to make concrete decisions. In comparison, Mordecai and the other Jewish people appear to desire to stay in a state of lamentation and mourning. Queen Esther, even though she is one of authority, appears to be dependent upon the loyalty and discretion of eunuchs and maids. It appears she and her harem live a secluded life and are totally oblivious to the decree issued in the citadel of Susa (3:15).<sup>28</sup> Esther has a dialogue with her eunuch Hathach. She is totally dependent upon his loyalty and discretion as he carries out her orders for him to dialogue with her cousin Mordecai.

Hathach approach Mordecai as ordered and a dialogue took place between them. Mordecai informed Hathach of the details of his sorrow and all the events that led him to the entrance of the King's gate. It is not clear once again if Mordecai's associates blame his prior behavior for the cause of the decree or if he blames Haman for everything that has happened. He also advised Hathach of a copy of the written decree to annihilate the Jewish people and the exact amount of money Haman promised to pay the king's treasury for the destruction of the Jewish people. Mordecai is adamant about Hathach giving the copy of the decree to Esther for her review to ensure she will summons the king to change the course of action of this matter. Mordecai's place of authority does not have an origin or an end. This pericope does not state how Mordecai received a copy of the

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<sup>27</sup> Crawford, "Esther," 903.

<sup>28</sup> Crawford, "Esther," 904.

decree. The decree was only proclaimed orally throughout the providence and issued in Susa. It is indicated as well that Mordecai has confidential information of the exact amount of money paid for the destruction of the Jewish people. There is an assumption of his power/authority in the different areas of the providence as well in reference to Mordecai's stance/position of authority and assumption that Esther will be obedient to him and his request.

#### *4:9-12*

As the dialogue continues through Hathach between Mordecai and Esther, the king is unaware of the possible security breach within his kingdom among his servants. Esther initially rejects Mordecai's request because it is against the palace protocol. It is known throughout the palace that one may receive the penalty of death if he or she appears before the king without being summoned. It is the tradition of the king to subject an individual to death if they approach the king in the inner court without permission. The king can make an exception for the individual that appears in the inner court with extending his golden scepter and spare his or her life. It is assumed Esther's initiating a security breach depending on the loyalty of her eunuchs and maids was quite different from placing her life at risk because of the decree. Esther is intelligent, cognitively aware and trained in the palace etiquette after several years as queen. During this scene in the literary prose, the king has not summoned her for a period of thirty days. The dialogue continues between Esther and Mordecai through her mediator Hathach. It is possible Esther remembered the king's former wife Vashti's fate because of her disobedience. It is not clear if Mordecai has forgotten the tradition and protocol of the place because of his

sorrow or if he is defiant and willing to risk everything to save the Jewish people.

Mordecai and Vashti seem to parallel with reacting to situations without thinking it through for a positive resolution.

#### *4:13-17*

Mordecai tends to respond to Esther in an increased stern stance in this part of the pericope. Mordecai further stipulates relief for the Jews will come from a different “quarter.”<sup>29</sup> The scripture is not clear in the meaning of Mordecai’s statement and the use of the word quarter. However, it is suggested by some scholars that Mordecai’s statement “may contain an oblique reference to God.”<sup>30</sup>

In contrast, Rev. Dr. Gregory R. Goswell states in his periodical, “Keeping God out of the Book of Esther,” Mordecai’s meaning of the word quarter indicates “place.”<sup>31</sup> He further states Mordecai’s statement simply indicates that help for the Jews will come from the outside if it does not come from within the palace. He further states “. . . through some other agent, presumably human.”<sup>32</sup> Goswell concludes his argument stating, “God’s control of events, while assumed, is not stated, precisely so that the roles of Mordecai, Esther and the other Jews might take center stage.”<sup>33</sup> On the contrary, Michael Fox believes that Mordecai statement in reference to help for the Jewish people displays

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<sup>29</sup> Crawford, “Esther,” 904.

<sup>30</sup> Crawford, “Esther,” 904.

<sup>31</sup> Gregory R. Goswell, “Keeping God Out of the Book of Esther,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 82 (2010): 99-110. Old Testament Abstracts, EBSCOhost, accessed October 11, 2014, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx>.

<sup>32</sup> Goswell, “Keeping God out of the Book of Esther.”

<sup>33</sup> Goswell, “Keeping God out of the Book of Esther.”

“such confidence usually derives from and expresses a belief in God’s covenantal care of Israel.”<sup>34</sup> Moreover, it appears Mordecai’s statement is indicating if Esther fails to help the Jews, help will come to save them, whether through divine or human efforts. The Septuagint Greek (LXX) translation to Hebrew version reveals God’s divine authority throughout the book of Esther and the word God is mentioned over fifty times.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, the Greek translation to Hebrew clearly reveals the help from a different quarter is describing God’s intervention to save the Jewish people.<sup>36</sup> It appears that Mordecai in the book of Esther is also strongly advising Esther as a fatherly figure and as one of with authority over her. This thought is exemplified when Mordecai states in verse fourteen, “. . . but you and your father’s family will perish” (4:14). It appears the statement mention of father’s family was in direct correlation to the house of Mordecai as her father according to John M. Wiebe.<sup>37</sup> Wiebe substantiates Mordecai’s father-ship further stating Esther was an orphan taken in by her elder cousin Mordecai and raised in his home.<sup>38</sup> Mordecai further inquire of Esther to ponder if she were placed in this status of royalty “ for such a time as this.”<sup>39</sup> He reminds Esther of her Jewish culture and that

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<sup>34</sup> Michael V. Fox, *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2001), 244.

<sup>35</sup> “Esther: The Greek Version Containing Additional Chapters,” Apocrypha, NRSV (2:20; 4:8; 6:13, 58, 60, 64).

<sup>36</sup> Esther 10:4-9, NRSV.

<sup>37</sup> John M. Wiebe, “Will Relief and Deliverance Arise for the Jews from Another Place?” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (July 1991): 409-415, Old Testament Abstracts, EBSCOhost, accessed October 11, 2014, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx>.

<sup>38</sup> John M. Wiebe, “Will Relief and Deliverance Arise for the Jews from Another Place?” “Esther.”

<sup>39</sup> Esther 4:14.

danger will overtake her at one point because it emanates from inside the palace.<sup>40</sup> Many times in life we are called upon or charged by God to do the hard things, the work many would not do; yet, it is usually the work that precisely needs to be done. The charge to minister to visit the sick and assist the living as they transition home to be with the Lord are just a few examples of ministry that every person must perform if they are to be used by God. Esther, like others, is called upon to do possibly the work she was created to perform. I can only imagine the significance for all people of faith in the book of Esther as the statement is raised by Mordecai: “Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this” (4:14). A charge or purpose was planted in Esther. Esther could have realized her purpose at the very moment and the meaning of her status as queen in the palace. I can only imply and/or questioned if Esther realized from her humble beginnings and felt her purpose for living vibrating within her.

### **Conclusion**

The narrative in the book of Esther reaches a turning point. Esther changes obviously inside and out. She immediately responds as one of authority and purpose. She embraces her divine purpose with a clear and concise directive response to Mordecai. Esther advises Mordecai to gather the Jews and fast for three days. She advises she will fast as well with her maids. She then states the unfathomable; she will go against the law and approached the king without permission. She further states: “. . . and if I perish, I perish” (4:16). It appears “redemption could occur only when divine planning intersected

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<sup>40</sup> Crawford, “Esther,” 904.

with human initiative.”<sup>41</sup> Esther transforms from abiding by the law to defiance against the law. Esther in 4:11 states she cannot approach the king without permission. In contrast, she states in verse 4:16, I will go against the law and approach the king. Esther has reconciled within herself the danger that lurks and the steps she must take to reverse the fate of her people. Mordecai in the last verse of this passage (4:17) receives the directive from Esther and left to carry out her instructions.

In concluding, the use of practical application of Esther and Mordecai demonstrates great courage in this literary narrative. Esther’s position as queen and as a woman in a male dominate court parallels to that of the Jewish people in the Gentile world with the possibility of danger lurking below the surface.<sup>42</sup> In reality, women in ministry and in particularly in leadership roles as minister, have parallels to Esther’s role in being in a male dominated court/church. Women are often serving in ministry and experiencing trials and challenges unique to other women in ministry. Therefore, the book of Esther is key in the project proposed to help women in ministry face the challenges and examine their purposes for existing. It is one thing to make a decision to improve our surroundings and another to act and follow through with making the necessary improvement. Esther at one point moves from a place of contemplation to a place of motivation. She looks beyond her status and place of comfort to a place of unselfishness and preservation of life of others. The book of Esther exemplifies the project proposed to move beyond myself to help others while trusting in a hidden God.

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<sup>41</sup> Jonathan Grossman, *Esther: The Outer Narrative and the Hidden Reading* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns Inc., 2011), 120.

<sup>42</sup> Crawford, “Esther,” 905.



In Philippians 3:8, Paul counted all things gained as loss for the value of knowing Christ. Carl McIntire states, “This is the glory of the Christian life; this the victory of the Christian faith . . .”<sup>43</sup> It is incumbent of every child of God to examine his or her purpose for being, living, position in life, and evaluate where God can use us for such a time as this, while we are on this journey called life.

### **New Testament**

The New Testament text in support of my theme comes from Acts 9:32-33, 36-40. The focal verses are 9:36, 39. Tabitha (Dorcas) is not necessarily the most popular woman found in the New Testament or the entire bible. The elite of the church did not readily know her. Yet, Dorcas was significant and elite in the heart of the poor, widows, men and women alike; and she was a woman serving in ministry. It is because of her “good works” that I chose her from the New Testament narratives in Acts to exemplify the type of woman serving in a selfless manner in churches in the U.S. and abroad. She exemplifies in her behavior and charity the woman that tirelessly serves and gives to the church without an expectation of recognition. Dorcas is the model for women who simply serve to meet the needs of the people and because they love the Lord. I am reminded of a verse where Jesus said, “...Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me” (Mt 25:40).

It is important to note Dorcas obviously served until she became sick and died. Many women in ministry, as I mention in my earlier papers, are dying on the vine of service to the church. They are overlooking the significant need to care for themselves in

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<sup>43</sup> Carl McIntire, *For Such A Time As This* (Collingswood, NJ: Christian Beacon Press, 1946), 66.

the form of diet, exercise, having a disciplined prayer life, seeking help from mentors, managing finances, and enjoying this life of ministry. Some women in ministry also view ministry as a burden and fail to operate in the gifts God has given them. Dr. Cynthia Hale states in a sermon, “Women in ministry is not a death sentence, it’s a badge of honor. Yes, it costs something; but anything that costs as much as we have to pay for it ought to be worn with gratitude and with authority.”<sup>44</sup> Our world can be falling apart as women; yet, we have enough love and strength to hold someone else together. Hale uses the term “tolerated” to further explain women who are not taken as seriously as they should be.<sup>45</sup> She further stipulates women should be celebrated for their gifts and uniqueness instead of tolerated.

Dorcas may not have caught the eye of the elite in society while living even though she was elite in the hearts of the poor. Moreover, she was elite in her death and caught the attention of Peter and moved him to prayer. The purpose of my propose project is to empower, encourage, inform and mentor women to keep them from living in isolation while in service to God and others. I envision and propose implementing a ministry project at SPBC entitled “The Women’s Empowerment Initiative: Connecting Women in Ministry Through Mentoring, Networking, and Spiritual Formation at Saint Paul’s Baptist Church.” This proposed project will aid women in their development as women in ministry, teach them, connect them to systems of empowerment and support and enable them to pass on viable information to other women. Women’s needs will be

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<sup>44</sup> Cynthia L. Hale, “You Can Be Whole,” Mark 5:25, Women In Ministry Conference Impartation Service, Disc 10, CD-Rom (Atlanta, GA: September 18, 2014).

<sup>45</sup> Cynthia L. Hale, “Celebrated, Not Just Tolerated!” in *This is My Story: Testimonies & Sermons of Black Women In Ministry*, ed. Cleophus J. LaRue (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 157.

addressed in partnership with the experts in the community in a variety of informative plenary sessions along with bible study and support groups. In my research of the church and reflection from twenty-seven years of service, I am aware that there is a unique population of servants that are not united, empowered and nurtured. This population, mentioned more specifically, are the women who are seeking candidacy/and or a place in ministry. There is a great deficit in the empowerment of women for ministry. Simply stated, aspiring women candidates for ministry need to be empowered, nurtured, taught, tutored, encouraged and united in ministry at SPBC.

### **Historical Context**

#### *Acts 32-33, 36-40*

The book of Acts, known also as The Acts of the Apostles, details God's plan of salvation. It also details the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus, which established a new era.<sup>46</sup> The book of Acts is one of the longest books of the New Testament with 1,003 verses compared to 1,151 in Luke and 1,071 in Matthew.<sup>47</sup> The author of the book of Acts is unknown. The writer of the book of Acts does not mention his name.<sup>48</sup> Traditions of the ancient church stipulate the evangelist Luke wrote the book of Luke as well as the

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<sup>46</sup> Darrell L. Bock, "Introduction to Acts," *Acts: Baker Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament*, eds. Robert W. Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic Publishing Group, 2007), 6.

<sup>47</sup> Bock, "Introduction to Acts," 6.

<sup>48</sup> Paul S. Taylor, "Acts of the Apostles," in *Christian Answers Network*, accessed December 1, 2014, <https://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/actsoftheapostles.html>.

book of Acts.<sup>49</sup> Scholars have sketched the basic features of the anonymous author. His basic features are inclusive of the following: He was educated, well-traveled Greek, possibly converted to Judaism years prior to becoming a Christian missionary, and he was an associate of the apostle Paul.<sup>50</sup> The anonymous author does not “insinuate himself”<sup>51</sup> into his story, nor does he identify himself during the apostle Paul’s European mission.<sup>52</sup>

In contrast, Clinton E. Arnold states that the author of the book of Acts is Luke. Ancient historians are unanimous in their “assertion that Luke was the author of Acts and the third Gospel.”<sup>53</sup> A second century papyrus that has the phrase “the gospel according to Luke”<sup>54</sup> at the end of the scroll is the earliest evidence of the writer of Acts. Luke is described as a physician from Syria and coworker of the apostle Paul. He ministered with Paul in Troas and Philippi.<sup>55</sup> Luke also accompanied Paul during his “Caesarean and Roman imprisonments.”<sup>56</sup> In addition, Luke the physician and companion of Paul is the

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<sup>49</sup> Robert W. Wall, “Acts as Conversation: Reading Acts as History,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible: A Commentary In Twelve Volumes: The Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 10, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 5.

<sup>50</sup> A. Culpeper, “The Gospel of Luke,” 1994-2002; 9:4-10, quoted in Robert W. Wall, “Acts as Conversation: Reading Acts as History,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible: A Commentary In Twelve Volumes: The Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 10 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 5.

<sup>51</sup> Wall, “Acts as Conversation: Reading Acts as History,” 5.

<sup>52</sup> Wall, “Acts as Conversation: Reading Acts as History,” 5.

<sup>53</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, ed., *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Acts as a Second Volume*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publisher, 2002) 220.

<sup>54</sup> Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible*, 220.

<sup>55</sup> Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible*, 219.

<sup>56</sup> Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible*, 219.

author of the book of Acts according to the second century early traditions.<sup>57</sup> Luke's association with Paul is further noted in the "we" passages of Acts 16:10-17, 20:5-15; 21:1-18; and 27:1-28.<sup>58</sup> These passages were interpreted as evidence of Luke's presence with Paul, and his writings are from his own personal experiences. It is also interpreted as his presence with Paul and his access to Paul's letters and diaries.<sup>59</sup> According to scholars, we do not know how long Luke traveled with Paul, or if he was familiar with his theology and preaching.<sup>60</sup>

The book of Acts is a second volume to Luke's Gospel. The book of Acts historically "recounts the first thirty years of the church."<sup>61</sup> The writings of Luke and Acts are "characterized by their prologues as two parts of one major literary work (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1: 1-2)."<sup>62</sup> The book of Acts is depicted as the second installment of Luke's two-volume account of the life, death and resurrection of Christ (volume 1).<sup>63</sup> The second volume in Acts described the beginning of the early church. The purpose of the writing is to legitimize and defend the church as the "authentic people of God in the present age."<sup>64</sup> It was also written to inspire and help believers grow in faith. The book of Acts is

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<sup>57</sup> R. Allen Culpepper, "The Gospel of Luke: Introduction, Commentary and Reflections," in *The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes: The Gospel of Luke*, vol. 9, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 4.

<sup>58</sup> Culpepper, "The Gospel of Luke: Introduction, Commentary and Reflections," 5.

<sup>59</sup> Culpepper, "The Gospel of Luke: Introduction, Commentary and Reflections," 5.

<sup>60</sup> Culpepper, "The Gospel of Luke: Introduction, Commentary and Reflections," 5.

<sup>61</sup> Bible Study Tools.com, accessed December 1, 2014, <https://www.biblestudytools.com/acts/>.

<sup>62</sup> Helmut Koester, *History and Literature of Early Christianity: Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1982), 308.

<sup>63</sup> Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds*, 219.

<sup>64</sup> Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible*, 219.

depicted as history focused on the beginning and early history of the church in Jerusalem. It is inclusive of but not limited to the history of the ministry of Peter, John and Paul. It gives an extensive history of how God used the gifts of Paul in Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome.<sup>65</sup> If Acts were a book with a comprehensive history of the church, the book would have included the ministries of other apostles, the origins of the church in Rome, the church in Galilee and the spread of Christianity in Egypt.<sup>66</sup> The book of Acts gives testimony to God's salvation through Jesus Christ. It also express and describes how salvation is extended to the Gentiles and people throughout the world.<sup>67</sup>

The book of Acts is a "written conversation" between Luke and Theophilus.<sup>68</sup> Luke address Theophilus as "most excellent," which is the same "honorific title," applicable to Roman governors of Judea, Felix and Festus.<sup>69</sup> It is not definitive Theophilus held a particular office because the title in which he was addressed could apply to a variety of people of social distinction.<sup>70</sup> Therefore the author does not tell the reader Theophilus' identity, his political post, or how he relates to the audience of Luke and Acts.<sup>71</sup> Theophilus appearance in the preface of the book of Luke and Acts could possibly reflect a "formal acknowledgement of his literary patronage."<sup>72</sup> The audience for

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<sup>65</sup> Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible*, 220.

<sup>66</sup> Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible*, 220.

<sup>67</sup> Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible*, 220.

<sup>68</sup> Wall, "Acts as Conversation: Reading Acts as History," 5.

<sup>69</sup> F. Scott Spencer, *Journeying Through Acts: A Literary-Cultural Reading* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publisher, 2004), 20.

<sup>70</sup> Spencer, *Journeying Through Acts*, 20.

<sup>71</sup> Spencer, *Journeying Through Acts*, 20.

<sup>72</sup> Spencer, *Journeying Through Acts*, 20.

which Acts is written cannot be determined if one focuses on the address of the letter from Luke. In contrast, F. Spencer referenced Philip Esler in stating, “the intended community of readers was a mixed lot both ethnically and economically, comprised of both Jewish and Gentile believers . . . .”<sup>73</sup> It was written in the Mediterranean area between 70 and 100 A.D.<sup>74</sup> approximately. The book is also referred to as the “Acts of the Apostle.”<sup>75</sup> The initial title is unknown because the manuscript of the narrative is not available for review. The title Acts is derived from the Greek word *praxeis*. It denotes “performance of some deed, act, and action.”<sup>76</sup> Maurer states in his summary and reference to A. Wikenhauser in the following statement: The title Acts translated from the Greek meaning *praxeis*, is from the second century instead of Luke.<sup>77</sup> The title Acts is attributed to the narrative to describe the acts of the apostles of the church.<sup>78</sup> The book of Acts is interpreted from the following readings and approaches theological perspectives’ schools of thought: theology, literary, cannon reading of scriptures and speeches. The book of Acts is also read as a “theological document.”<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Spencer, *Journeying Through Acts*, 21.

<sup>74</sup> William H. Willimon, “Introduction in Acts,” in *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1988), 1.

<sup>75</sup> J. Bradley Chance, “Introduction, Acts,” in *Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary*, ed. R. Allen Culpepper (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publisher, 2007), 1.

<sup>76</sup> Fredrick William Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Christian Literature*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 860.

<sup>77</sup> Gerhard Friedrich, ed, “Acts,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, Co., 1971), 642-644.

<sup>78</sup> Chance, “Introduction, Acts,” 1.

<sup>79</sup> Willimon, “Introduction in Acts,” 7.

The sources Luke used in his writings of the book of Acts cannot be verified and confirmed. It is possible Luke may have utilized traditional materials available to him and his perception of how the early community was established in Jerusalem and across Rome. Luke's creative conception is noted in the numerous speeches, which are one third of the narrative in the book of Acts.<sup>80</sup> The speeches give voices to the various characters throughout this narrative. The speeches advance the theological, literary and ideology objectives of narrative. The speeches are in line with the "Lukan conception of the essential harmony of the first apostles and Christian preachers."<sup>81</sup> Scholars have not reached a consensus in reference to the sources and traditions of the composition of the book of Acts due to the re-casting of the traditional oral stories and preexisting written materials.<sup>82</sup>

### **Culture Context**

The book of Acts displays a vibrant portrait of the multiplicity of cultures in the first century world. The historical location of the book of Acts is the Roman Empire which controls every territory and city named in the collection: Luke-Acts.<sup>83</sup> In the midst of Roman control, the Greek language is evident in Luke's writing. The motif throughout this narrative has counterparts in Greek literature beginning with Homer (Greek poet) and

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<sup>80</sup> Christopher R. Matthews, "Acts of the Apostles," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Books of the Bible ACTS-LXX*, vol. 1, ed. Michael D. Coogan (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 15.

<sup>81</sup> Matthews, "Acts of the Apostles," 15.

<sup>82</sup> Matthews, "Acts of the Apostles," 15.

<sup>83</sup> Beverly Roberts Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," in *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: A-C*, vol.1, ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006), 36.



extending well past Luke's time.<sup>84</sup> A standard feature of Greek literature is displayed in the extended account of Paul's journey to Italy by ship, inclusive of the shipwreck and the welcome of local inhabitants.<sup>85</sup> In addition, Paul's sermon in Athens presented Athenian intellectuals in conversation with Epicureans and Stoics.<sup>86</sup> They were located in the heart of Greek civilization and significantly reflect the values of Greek culture.<sup>87</sup>

### **Literary Features/Characteristics, Style and Structure**

The genre of the book of Acts is determined by some scholars to belong to the category of historiography.<sup>88</sup> Yet, other scholars propose the genre of Acts is an ancient novel.<sup>89</sup> Several proposals suggest the genre of Acts within historiographical writings: historical monograph, apologetic history, general history, and institutional history. Acts is read by some as the "history of the successors of Jesus and continues Luke's biography of Jesus."<sup>90</sup> Individual features of each genre are fluid within the lines of Acts. In several ancient novels, there are counterparts of Paul's shipwreck on the island of Malta where he was welcomed by the local inhabitants.<sup>91</sup> In addition the speeches in the book of Acts

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<sup>84</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostle," 37.

<sup>85</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," 37.

<sup>86</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," 36.

<sup>87</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," 36.

<sup>88</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," 37.

<sup>89</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," 37.

<sup>90</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," 37.

<sup>91</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," 38.

are found in the literary historiography. Therefore, it is suggested to explore the book of Acts through multiple genres instead through a “single lens.”<sup>92</sup>

The narrative of the book of Acts parallels the Gospel of Luke. For an example, the story of Jesus’ ascension closes the book of Luke and opens the book of Acts. Jesus’ role as a healer parallels the healings demonstrated by Peter (3:1-10; 9:32-43) and Paul (14:8-11).<sup>93</sup> In addition, Stephen’s death displays the death of an innocent person and parallels the death of Jesus. Moreover, Stephen prays in his anguish to God to receive his spirit just as Jesus submits his spirit to God.<sup>94</sup>

This style of literary narrative depicts “extensive repetition”<sup>95</sup> within the book of Acts. The elaborate use of repetition is displayed in this narrative prose in both single elements and entire scenes of Cornelius account in (10:1-11:18). The vision involving clean and unclean animals is seen by Peter three times in a vision (10:9-16). The men who came to Peter from Cornelius repeat what Cornelius (and the reader) has already learned in (10:1-19),<sup>96</sup> yet Cornelius repeats it again himself in verse (10:30-33). Peter in Jerusalem restates this entire event again before believers (11:1-18). In addition, the entire event resurfaces again during a discussion at the Apostolic Church (15:7-11).<sup>97</sup> Paul’s conversion is another prominent instance of repetition, which is narrated by Luke three times in chapters nine, twenty-two and twenty-six. It is narrated in three distinctive

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<sup>92</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 38.

<sup>93</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 39.

<sup>94</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 39.

<sup>95</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 39.

<sup>96</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 39.

<sup>97</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 39.

ways that reflect the context of each narration.<sup>98</sup> The sermons of various characters repeat and reinforce one another in their interpretation of Jesus' position in Israel's history, their accusation against Jerusalem Jews for crucifying Jesus and their explanation of God's role in events.<sup>99</sup> Peter's sermons in Jerusalem and Paul's initial sermon at Pisidian Antioch are examples of repetition and reinforce one another teachings of Jesus. In Acts, the stories of Paul's witness in various cities are sometimes hard to distinguish from one another because of the repetition patterns of proclamation, acceptance of the gospel by some and resistance to the gospel by others.<sup>100</sup>

Luke continues the patterns of repetition in the book of Acts utilizing male and female characters. In the story of Ananias and Sapphira, Luke explains the details of the consequences of Ananias instead of writing the story as a single event. The intricate details unfold in the story of Ananias and are repeated as Sapphira experience the same demise (5:1-10).<sup>101</sup> In addition, the healing of Aeneas (9:32-35) and Dorcas/Tabitha (9:36-43) are two vignettes which are repeated at the conclusion of Acts chapter nine.<sup>102</sup> In his writings, his characters are not developed and does not display a "modern interest in character study."<sup>103</sup> Luke's vivid details in this narrative display some of his characters in a more appealing stance. The following verses are an example of Luke's vivid details: "Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Go south to the road-the desert road-that goes

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<sup>98</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," 39.

<sup>99</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," 39.

<sup>100</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," 39.

<sup>101</sup> Glo Bible, "Acts 5:1-10," accessed February 16, 2015 <http://www.globible.com>.

<sup>102</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," 39.

<sup>103</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," 39.

down from Jerusalem to Gaza.’ So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopia eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (queen of the Ethiopians). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet” (8:26-28).<sup>104</sup> In addition, later in the narrative Paul encounters a female slave which had a spirit of divination. The spirit of divination allowed her owners to earn “a great deal of money.”<sup>105</sup> In one verse/sentence (16:16) he gave details of the female situation and the avarice/greed of her owners.<sup>106</sup>

Luke’s character in this narrative of Acts enters and exits the scene to play a “specific role within the larger story of God’s actions on behalf of Israel and the Gentiles.”<sup>107</sup> As an example, in the story of Matthias, he is selected as a replacement for Judas (1:15-26) whereas he is a character entering and existing the narrative. Luke sets the stage for an expectation in which Matthias will serve a significant role; however, Matthias is never mentioned again in the narrative.<sup>108</sup> Furthermore, Luke mentions the selection of seven men appointed to be responsible for caring for the widows, yet only two of them re-appear in the narrative again, Philip and Stephen (6:1-6).<sup>109</sup> Moreover, Peter disappears from the narrative of Acts after the Jerusalem Council even though his

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<sup>104</sup> Glo Bible, “Acts 8:26-28,” accessed February 16, 2015, <http://www.globible.com>.

<sup>105</sup> Glo Bilbe, “Acts 16:16,” accessed February 16, 2015, <http://www.globible.com>.

<sup>106</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 39.

<sup>107</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 39.

<sup>108</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 39.

<sup>109</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 39.

work was crucial in Jerusalem.<sup>110</sup> It is also pertinent to note there is a similar pattern found in the narrative with the introduction of Saul with his initial appearance during the death of Stephen (7:59-8:1, 3). He disappears from the narrative and enters again in the account of his conversion from Saul to Paul in chapter nine.<sup>111</sup>

### **Theological and Religious Significant Themes of Acts**

The book of Acts/Acts of the Apostle's narrative is spoken of in the story of the church or Peter, and Paul. However, the "overarching theological preoccupation of Acts is with God."<sup>112</sup> Luke's theological expressions are notable with the two phrases: "will of God" and "plan of God."<sup>113</sup> In addition, the narrative of Luke refers to the content of the narrative as "word of God" as noted in the story of Sergius Paulus. Sergius Paulus seeks to hear "the word of God" from Barnabas and Paul (13:7).<sup>114</sup> Notable in the narrative is how Luke refers to the "plan of God" to display the intention and oversight of God which interprets the life and ministry of Jesus. In addition, the phrase "plan of God" is unveiled in the spread of the witness of Jesus and his resurrection throughout the Mediterranean world.<sup>115</sup> Furthermore, in the narrative of Acts, Peter declares that God's plan included the Jews who killed Jesus (2:23), and Paul summarize his preaching as compromising the

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<sup>110</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," 39.

<sup>111</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostle," 39.

<sup>112</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," 41.

<sup>113</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," 41.

<sup>114</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," 41.

<sup>115</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," 41.

“whole purpose [i.e., plan] of God” (20:27).<sup>116</sup> These phrases reveal Luke’s fundamental understanding that God is the God of Israel and his comprehensive understanding of the role of God.<sup>117</sup> God’s faithfulness to the promises of scripture is in the narrative of Acts and it replays God’s covenant faithfulness in the Old Testament.<sup>118</sup>

Therefore, Acts not only reminds readers that God is the God of Israel and Jesus, he is also the God “who acts decisively to include the Gentiles.”<sup>119</sup> Luke at this particular time in the narrative employs an abstraction and or principle description of God’s character in the account of Cornelius and Peter (10:1-11:18).<sup>120</sup> Peter reluctantly recognizes that what God makes clean includes the Gentiles. God has opened a door of faith and salvation to the Gentiles through his son Jesus the Christ. In the narrative of Acts, God is unveiled as a God concerned with the community of believers. God acts among and through those “who are called to believe in Jesus’ name.”<sup>121</sup>

### **The Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is inclusive in the opening sentences of the narrative of Acts (1:2, 5).<sup>122</sup> The Holy Spirit is present and active throughout the narrative. Some theologians find tracing the location of the Holy Spirit in the narrative to be frustrating, “literally and

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<sup>116</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 41.

<sup>117</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 41.

<sup>118</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 42.

<sup>119</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 42.

<sup>120</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 42.

<sup>121</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 42.

<sup>122</sup> Acts 1:2, 5 (NRSV).

theologically,” because of the pattern.<sup>123</sup> The Spirit’s activity is located in one place and overturned in another place (2:38, 10:44).<sup>124</sup> The actions attributed to the Holy Spirit in one place in the narrative are also attributed to Jesus and God in another place in the narrative therefore, revealing a Trinitarian language.

The Holy Spirit has several roles in the narrative of Acts. Firstly, it connects the community of Israel to the prophetic voice of the Spirit; secondly, the spirit serves prominently to empower believers; and thirdly, it is the inaugurator of the witness.<sup>125</sup> Firstly, the Holy Spirit is connected to the community of Israel as Peter reference the Psalms in the narrative of Acts (1:16-21) as the reason to replace Judas as attested by the Holy Spirit.<sup>126</sup> The narrative connects to the community of Israel again when Peter stood up to address the crowd and referenced Joel in Acts (2:14-17).<sup>127</sup> In the conclusion of the book of Acts (28:25), Paul connects the Holy Spirit to the community as he attest to the truth spoken to their ancestors by the spirit through Isaiah the prophet.<sup>128</sup> Secondly, particularly noticeable in the book of Acts is the purpose of the spirit to empower believers. The Holy Spirit empowers believers through the multiplication of speech during Pentecost (2:1-40).<sup>129</sup> Moreover, Peter declares in his citation of Joel to the crowd the spirit’s empowerment will fall upon “all flesh,” “your sons and your daughter,”

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<sup>123</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 43.

<sup>124</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 43.

<sup>125</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 43-44.

<sup>126</sup> Acts 1:16-21 (NSRV).

<sup>127</sup> Acts 2:14-17 (NSRV).

<sup>128</sup> Acts 28:25 (NSRV).

<sup>129</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostle,” 43.

“young men,” and “old men” (2:17-18).<sup>130</sup> The book of Acts on numerous occasions illustrates the gift of the Holy Spirit to believers; however, it is not predictable or consistent in this or other matters.<sup>131</sup> Thirdly, the Spirit is utilized in the narrative as the inaugurator of the witness and an agent of empowerment.<sup>132</sup> The Spirit commanded Phillip to go the chariot of the Ethiopian eunuch and later sends him to Caesarea (8:29, 40).<sup>133</sup> The Spirit directed Peter to go to the home of Cornelius despite his resistance (10:19-20).<sup>134</sup> Furthermore, it was under the direction of the Holy Spirit in which the Antioch church commissioned Paul and Barnabas to start their ministry (13:1-3).<sup>135</sup> Later, the Ephesian church is reminded by Paul that they were appointed by the Holy Spirit (20:28). In addition, Paul shares with the Ephesian church of the testimony of the Spirit and how he is held captive by the Spirit and the warning he received from the Spirit (20:22-23).<sup>136</sup>

### **Portrait of the Church**

In the narrative of Acts one sees the origin of the church. The church originates from God and is evidence of God’s plan and activity in the world.<sup>137</sup> The church’s entire existence is created from the intervention of God through the resurrected Christ. It was

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<sup>130</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 43.

<sup>131</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 44.

<sup>132</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 44.

<sup>133</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 44.

<sup>134</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 44.

<sup>135</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 44.

<sup>136</sup> Bible Gateway, *Book of Acts*, accessed February 27, 2015, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts>.

<sup>137</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 44.



the intervention of God through the risen Christ which commands the disciples to stay in Jerusalem prior to the day of Pentecost (1:4).<sup>138</sup> In addition, Peter's initial sermon was prompted by the arrival of the Spirit which elicits the faith of over 3,000 believers. The narrative reveals in vivid details God's activity in the church of Jerusalem at the end of Acts chapter two.<sup>139</sup> In the narrative of Acts, the activities of the church are directed and corrected sometimes by God and God's agents. An angel directs Philip to a deserted place where travel is unusual in the middle of the day in the story of the Ethiopian eunuch.<sup>140</sup> Then the Spirit of the Lord directs Philip to run to the chariot and later the Spirit quickly took him away to Azotus (8:26:40).<sup>141</sup> More importantly, the inclusion of the Gentiles is a result of God's intervention and direction of the activities in the church. The inclusion of the Gentiles was a divine intervention in the direction of the church activities in the midst of resistance from those in the church to include Peter.<sup>142</sup> In the narrative of Acts, God's agents/believers took the initiative to replace Judas and to provide food for the widows after seeking God in prayer.<sup>143</sup>

Among the activities of the church are the doxology and the witness of the church. The doxology is the praise of God and is the primary activity of the church.<sup>144</sup> Luke in the narrative of Acts utilizes a broad vocabulary of amazement, awe, rejoicing,

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<sup>138</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," 44.

<sup>139</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," 44.

<sup>140</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," 44.

<sup>141</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," 44.

<sup>142</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," 44.

<sup>143</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," 44.

<sup>144</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," 44.

joy, praise, and prayer as ascribed to believers.<sup>145</sup> The doxology is revealed in the form of a response of the presence of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and in the description of the Jerusalem community at the end of chapter two in the book of Acts.<sup>146</sup> The church also has the task of offering a bold witness to the world in the form of proclamation of the gospel. The narrative displays the proclamation of the gospel throughout the cities of the Mediterranean starting at Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, and extending to the “ends of the world” (1:8).<sup>147</sup> Luke characterizes this proclamation as involving boldness of speech, teachings, healings as well as mutual responsibility in the community of believers.<sup>148</sup> It is the community of believer’s responsibility to demonstrate the witness of the church.<sup>149</sup> In Jerusalem, the church attributed several functions to their community such as worship, sharing meals and sharing possessions.<sup>150</sup> The community is connected through bonds that are theological, liturgical, and social.<sup>151</sup> The community connections through bonds are derived from God’s intervention 2:42-47.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 44.

<sup>146</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 44.

<sup>147</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 45.

<sup>148</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 45.

<sup>149</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 45.

<sup>150</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 45.

<sup>151</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 45.

<sup>152</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 45.

### **Women Leadership in the Church**

It is significant to indicate the purpose of the proposed project: “The Women’s Empowerment Initiative.” In the narrative of Acts there is a clear and meaningful presence of women. The narrative of Acts displays what appears to be a deliberate presence of women in the following verses (9:2, 36; 17:34; 21:5).<sup>153</sup> Mary, Jesus’ mother, is identified by name in the earliest post-ascension gathering of believers for prayer. Women such as Mary (the mother of John Mark) and Lydia met a crucial need of the believers by making their households available in an emerging community (12:12; 16:15-40).<sup>154</sup> A female disciple, Dorcas (the pertinent character for the project), is mentioned in this narrative as providing for the widows in Joppa (9:36-43) in addition to Priscilla who joins Aquilla in completing the instruction of Apollos (18:24-28).<sup>155</sup> Moreover, the narrative depicts the unnamed daughters of Phillip among the prophets.<sup>156</sup> The narrative of Acts depicts women without a voice and among those who are misunderstood and misappropriate as revealed in the story of deceit with Sapphira and her husband (5:1-11).<sup>157</sup> The women’s speech is reported indirectly and seldom quoted in this narrative despites Peter’s speech in reference to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on male as well as female (2:17-18).<sup>158</sup> In addition, this is in contrast with the leadership of women

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<sup>153</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 45.

<sup>154</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 45.

<sup>155</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 45.

<sup>156</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 45.

<sup>157</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 45.

<sup>158</sup> Gaventa, “Acts of the Apostles,” 45.

identified in Paul's letters in Romans chapter sixteen.<sup>159</sup> In this narrative, which is consistent with Luke's writings, women are depicted as believers or opponents of the gospel. In some instances, women are depicted as serving and giving generously in respect to one another as in the case of Dorcas and Lydia.<sup>160</sup> In addition, women are also depicted as endowed with prophetic gifts and offer instruction as demonstrated among Philip's daughters, even if the content of their speech was never heard.<sup>161</sup> It is important to stipulate, when the writer Luke introduces characters in the narrative (whether male or female), he places them in relationship to the gospel. It is pertinent in Luke's assessment where people stand in relationship to the gospel.<sup>162</sup>

### **Acts 9:32-33, 36-42**

The book of Acts surveys Peter's ministry on the coastal plain. Lydda and Joppa were two important cities on the coastal plains that were nearly Jewish.<sup>163</sup> The Plain of Sharon runs along the Mediterranean coastline from the twin cities, Lydda and Joppa, northward to Samarian Caesarea.<sup>164</sup> Lydda was the "first large Jewish place in the plain," and was twenty-five miles northwest from Jerusalem.<sup>165</sup> Joppa was the only significant

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<sup>159</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," 45.

<sup>160</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," 46.

<sup>161</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," 46.

<sup>162</sup> Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles," 46.

<sup>163</sup> Craig S. Keener, "Healing on the Coastal Plain," *ACTS: An Exegetical Commentary*, 3:1-14:28, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2012), 1704.

<sup>164</sup> Wall, "Acts as Conversation: Reading Acts as History," 161.

<sup>165</sup> Keener, "Healing on the Coastal Plain," 1704-1705.

Jewish port and was located thirty miles from Lydda.<sup>166</sup> This narrative draws attention to the gospel on the Judean coast in reference to the two healings in Lydda and Joppa respectively.<sup>167</sup> In Lydda, Peter restores the paralytic Aeneas (9:33-35) and the deceased Tabitha/Dorcas in Joppa (9:36-42).<sup>168</sup> The second healing in Joppa (modern Jaffa) is more urgent because another believer, Tabitha, became ill and died.<sup>169</sup> The witnesses in her community sent two men to appeal to Peter.<sup>170</sup> The narrative gives us the believer's name: Tabitha in Aramaic and Dorcas in Greek forms. Her name means "a gazelle."<sup>171</sup> The Greek word for disciple used to describe Tabitha is *mathetria*, female disciple. This is the only time the word is used in the New Testament.<sup>172</sup> Tabitha is an example of what the book of James refers to as "doers of the word" (James 1:22).<sup>173</sup> Tabitha was a follower of Christ as described in this narrative in her examples of doing good works and acts of charity. Tabitha was possibly a single, wealthy woman living in Joppa.<sup>174</sup> In contrast, it is also noted that Dorcas was a widow, yet she continued to live her life

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<sup>166</sup> Keener, "Healing on the Coastal Plain," 1705

<sup>167</sup> Keener, "Healing on the Coastal Plain," 1704.

<sup>168</sup> Wall, "Acts as Conversation: Reading Acts as History," 160.

<sup>169</sup> Wall, "Acts as Conversation: Reading Acts as History," 160.

<sup>170</sup> J. Ellsworth Kalas, *Strong Was Her Faith: Women of the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007), 79.

<sup>171</sup> Kalas, *Strong Was Her Faith*, 78.

<sup>172</sup> Dandi Daley Mackall, *Kindred Sisters: New Testament Women Speak to Us Today: A Book of Meditation and Reflection* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1996), 150.

<sup>173</sup> Mackall, *Kindred Sisters*, 150.

<sup>174</sup> Mackall, *Kindred Sisters*, 150.

helping others.<sup>175</sup> There is no proof of the speculation in which some scholars think Tabitha was a businesswoman.<sup>176</sup> Joppa was the location of an ancient seaport. In addition, Joppa was also the location where shipwrecked boats often carried the bodies of seafaring men to the shores. In this town overlooking the Mediterranean, there would have been widows with unmet needs in which Tabitha acts of charity rose to the occasion.<sup>177</sup>

She enters this narrative, an apostolic story, after she has died. It appears she died unexpectedly because in this narrative it states, “she became ill and died” (Acts 9:37).<sup>178</sup> Her body was washed and she was laid in a room upstairs. The community that loved Tabitha heard that Peter was in Lydda (near Joppa); therefore, they sent two men to urgently appeal to Peter for his help. Tabitha’s good works and charity were inclusive of helping men as well in her community since they were sent to appeal to Peter for help. Peter’s reputation as a healer coupled with dramatic accounts of healing in this narrative has given hope to believers that a dead woman could be resuscitated from the dead through God’s grace.<sup>179</sup> Once Peter arrived in Joppa, widows weeping surrounded him and showed him tunics and clothing Dorcas had made for them while she was living. Dorcas as mentioned in this narrative devoted her life to good works and acts of charity. Dorcas was the only person who was so important to the early body of believers that they

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<sup>175</sup> Sue and Larry Richards, *Every Woman In The Bible, Fully Illustrated* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1999), 237-238.

<sup>176</sup> Kalas, *Strong Was Her Faith*, 78.

<sup>177</sup> Mackall, *Kindred Sisters*, 150.

<sup>178</sup> Kalas, *Strong Was Her Faith*, 79.

<sup>179</sup> Wall, “Acts as Conversation: Reading Acts as History,” 161.

appealed to the premier leader of the church for help.<sup>180</sup> This miracle of Dorcas raised the question: Was there any preacher or teacher in Joppa whose death would have left the community as bereft as the death of Dorcas? Would they have made such a dramatic appeal for a bishop or any comparable church official?<sup>181</sup> It is amazing that Dorcas, with her unique yet ordinary ministry, evoked such a miracle from God. Peter was possibly moved by all he saw and everything that was told to him. He sent everyone outside and knelt to pray. In Peter's ministry beyond Jerusalem, his response is more direct and empathetic.<sup>182</sup> Peter hears the widows' lamentation; he prays; and then he resuscitates Tabitha (9:40-41).<sup>183</sup> Peter commands, "Tabitha get up," and then he extended his hand to help her get up.<sup>184</sup> In addition, Peter returned Tabitha to the people by calling in the saints to see her alive. Peter, acting in his prophetic role, announces the availability of the Lord's healing power among those who believe.<sup>185</sup> Peter's power to heal the sick is a function of his close communion with the Lord.<sup>186</sup> As a result of this healing, many people believed in the Lord. The characteristics of Acts are inclusive of "signs and wonders," yet the summaries are gapped and should be filled in with additional details. The additional details should be culled (selected from a variety of resources) from similar missionary episodes. Consequently, the reader of Acts will know the inference of every

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<sup>180</sup> Kalas, *Strong Was Her Faith*, 83.

<sup>181</sup> Mackall, *Kindred Sisters*, 83.

<sup>182</sup> Wall, "Acts as Conversation: Reading Acts as History," 162.

<sup>183</sup> Wall, "Acts as Conversation: Reading Acts as History," 162.

<sup>184</sup> Wall, "Acts as Conversation: Reading Acts as History," 162.

<sup>185</sup> Wall, "Acts as Conversation: Reading Acts as History," 162.

<sup>186</sup> Wall, "Acts as Conversation: Reading Acts as History," 162.

conversion is that people will “believe in the Lord” (9:35) and “turn to the Lord” (9:35) in response to the proclamation of the gospel.<sup>187</sup>

In conclusion, the narrative of Acts, specifically the healing of Tabitha, is characteristic of God’s power to heal and resurrect the dead. It is a reflection upon the healing and resurrection power demonstrated in Jesus the Christ. The raising of Tabitha from the dead depicts a man name Peter that answered the calling of God. Peter’s call from God was to go where he sent him, to help those he was sent to, and heal by faith people through prayer. Peter prayed to a living God for answers to life’s situations. Peter’s missionary work and faith depicts the role of “preaching and praxis” in its fullness. The “Women’s Empowerment Initiative” seeks to provide a place for women in ministry to understand who they are in Christ as they serve within their ministry context. Moreover, it is significant to note these women in ministry are often unknown and serve diligently behind the scenes of their context. Like Tabitha, they are making a profound difference in the lives of God’s created people. In this pericope of Acts, Tabitha’s character was prayerfully chosen to serve as a catalyst to move God’s women servants from death (due to serving on empty) to abundant life while serving God’s people joyously.

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<sup>187</sup> Wall, “Acts as Conversation: Reading Acts as History,” 162.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS**

#### **Introduction**

It is impossible to research, review, evaluate and discuss the opulent history of religion without including the contributions, attributes, characteristics and struggles of women. Women are as much a part of the woven tapestry of history in these United States of America and abroad as men. This paper provides an exhaustive and inclusive overview of Women in various religious communities. It is inclusive but not limited to the following: Female Societies, Religious Order, Comparative History, Sacred Texts, Contemporary Issues, Women Rights, and Ordination of Women. It further depicts the following eras in history: Progressive Era and Nineteenth, Twentieth, and Twentieth-First Centuries.

#### **Women in Religion: An Overview**

The quest for women is ethically relevant.<sup>1</sup> Since the beginning, women are a part of God's history according to the Gospel of Mark 15:40.<sup>2</sup> Women are marginalized less

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<sup>1</sup> Luzia Sutter Rehmann, "Women," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Ethics*, vol. 2, MAG-ZEP, translated by Martin Rumscheidt, ed. Robert L. Brawley (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014), 422.

<sup>2</sup> Rehmann, "Women," 422.

in biblical texts than they are in the history of their interpretation, whether as leaders in the history of Israel, as prophets, coworkers in the early Jesus movement or apostles.<sup>3</sup> History consists of stories that populate our imagination.<sup>4</sup> Women and men give shape to this imagination and play important roles in history.<sup>5</sup>

The separation of the public and the private sphere in societies continues to exist throughout time and cultures. This separation restricted women primarily to the domestic realm.<sup>6</sup> The roles women play in religion remained strongly influenced by gendered division of labor despite the changes of the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup> Women traditionally played an exclusive or predominate role related to family and religious rites. The religious rites and family practices were related to the female sexuality, birth, marriage, food preparation, and child raising.<sup>8</sup>

In Judaism, Jewish women's roles consisted of preparing food for meals, keeping a kosher kitchen, baking special breads for festivals, organizing new moon celebrations (*mikvah*), monthly purification, lighting candles for the ritual meals, and washing and wrapping the body for burial continue to be women's religious sphere.<sup>9</sup>

In Catholicism, a Catholic woman's role predominantly consisted of keeping the home altars, making special devotions to Mary and the saints, and praying the

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<sup>3</sup> Rehmannn, "Women," 422.

<sup>4</sup> Rehmannn, "Women," 422.

<sup>5</sup> Rehmannn, "Women," 422.

<sup>6</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Religion: Overview," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Women and World History*, vol. 3, ed. Bonnie G. Smith (New York, NY: Oxford University Press Inc., 2008), 591.

<sup>7</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 591

<sup>8</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 591

<sup>9</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 591

rosemary.<sup>10</sup> Catholic women also teach small children their prayers and religious observances, which is a part of the mother's role in most religions.<sup>11</sup>

In Hinduism, a woman's religious tasks consist of the following: "performing rites related to birth, female puberty rites, preparation for marriage, and the maintenance of purity laws; it also includes keeping home shrines where lamps and incense are lit, prayer, food offered to deities, organizing votive rituals, and managing feasting, fasting and festivals."<sup>12</sup>

In Buddhism, a women's religiosity lies outside of monastic practices such as mediation.<sup>13</sup> Women prepare and donate food to feed the monks, keep home altars, and recite daily prayers belonging to lay Buddhism.

Jainism is an ancient minority religion in India.<sup>14</sup> The woman's role in Jainism is to prepare foods according to the strict dietary laws for the family, monks and nuns.<sup>15</sup> They also teach the tradition to their children. The women also engage in frequent fasts to compensate for the bad karma of having been born female.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 591.

<sup>11</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 591

<sup>12</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 591

<sup>13</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 591.

<sup>14</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 591.

<sup>15</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 591.

<sup>16</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 591.

Islam maintains a strict separation of male and female spheres.<sup>17</sup> Women in Islam worshipped separately from the men and the home is the women's primary place.<sup>18</sup> Women form separate all-female groups for Qur'anic study in mosques. In Westernized mosques, the woman's role in Islam is similar to traditional roles in Christian congregations.<sup>19</sup> Those roles consist of preparing food for festivals and teaching children.<sup>20</sup>

The women's role in family religion is often transferred to local congregations, mosques and temples. Women are usually responsible for the food preparations for festival meals and potlucks.<sup>21</sup> Women clean sacred sacraments and garments, arrange flowers, and clean sanctuaries. They oversee catechetics for small children and hold bazaars to raise money for the temple, mosque, or parish.<sup>22</sup> The Roman Catholics have organized societies with special lay female organizations to perform such duties. The organizations consist of women sodalities and rosary societies.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 591.

<sup>18</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 591.

<sup>19</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 591.

<sup>20</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 591.

<sup>21</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 591.

<sup>22</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 591.

<sup>23</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 591.

## **Female Societies and Religious Orders**

In the nineteenth century Protestant women formed female societies to support missions and engage in social work.<sup>24</sup> In the field of social work they focused their efforts specifically in charitable outreach to the poor, sick and elderly. These female societies remain as national organizations with sectors in local parishes.<sup>25</sup> The Protestant female societies play a role in the politics of denominational lines in groups such as Church Women United.<sup>26</sup> They are active in issues of ecology, justice and peace.<sup>27</sup> A primary source of monetary funds for social justice work was often received from women's society of the denomination.<sup>28</sup>

In the fourth century, Christianity developed female monasticism.<sup>29</sup> In the mid-nineteenth century, Anglicanism revived Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy nuns that still exist.<sup>30</sup> Western Christianity has several female religious orders. Generally, Catholic nuns are well educated and move into roles as teachers at all levels of education.<sup>31</sup> Nuns in the United States, historically, have become the founders of colleges, hospitals, orphanages and old age homes (retirement homes).<sup>32</sup> They are known to reach these

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<sup>24</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>25</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>26</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>27</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>28</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>29</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>30</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>31</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>32</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

societal statuses due to the financial backing of philanthropists.<sup>33</sup> Their societal activism focused on issues using the investments of their religious order to pressure corporations to adopt more ecological sustainable environmental practices or to pay better wages to workers in the late twentieth century.<sup>34</sup> Some nuns have become effectively the pastors of congregations and predominate in college, prison, and hospital chaplaincies due to the shortage of priests.<sup>35</sup>

Jains (a religion of India) and Buddhists traditionally have had orders of nuns.<sup>36</sup> Some lineages of nuns' orders were allowed to lapse in Buddhism.<sup>37</sup> In the twentieth century there was controversy in reference to the restoration of full ordination to nuns in Buddhism and Jains.<sup>38</sup> Historically, nuns received less economic support from the laity, and were less educated. In the late twentieth century, Jains and Buddhist nuns started organizing for better economic support and education.<sup>39</sup> In the early twenty-first century, Buddhist nuns were running colleges and engaging in social outreach. In addition, Buddhist nuns have a history of working with and helping lay women escape prostitution in Thailand.<sup>40</sup> In the late nineteenth century "deaconess movements," sister hoods of female lay ministers were founded by some Protestant denominations to include:

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<sup>33</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>34</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>35</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>36</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>37</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>38</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>39</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>40</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

Lutherans, Methodist, and Episcopalians.<sup>41</sup> These female organizations were celibate and lived in community providing social outreach to the poor, founding hospitals, orphanages, and old age homes.<sup>42</sup> The Protestant lay female deaconate had been largely absorbed in to ordained orders of deacons and elders by the end of the twentieth.<sup>43</sup> Female orders were included in the nineteenth-century revival of Anglican religious orders.<sup>44</sup>

Women have been excluded from the highest leadership of religions, yet have often been admitted to and have been predominated in preaching and in cult leadership.<sup>45</sup> They were admitted to and predominate in the preaching and cult leadership when this is associated with spirit possession, ecstatic behavior and healing.<sup>46</sup> It is assumed in many cultures that women are more open to spiritual powers than men and capable of mediating spiritual power.<sup>47</sup>

Before the late twentieth century women were excluded from public preaching and from the ordained priesthood.<sup>48</sup> Today, in most branches of Christianity, women are accepted as visionaries and prophets who might become vehicles for the voice of God.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>42</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>43</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>44</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>45</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>46</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>47</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>48</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>49</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

In Pentecostal, charismatic and revivalist types of Protestantism, however, women are allowed to preach, especially when preaching is observed as ecstatic gifts rather than academic training.<sup>50</sup> Women play major roles in faith healing within various religious traditions.<sup>51</sup> The ministry in faith healing is reserved exclusively for women in Christian Science.<sup>52</sup> Women form the majority of mediums, tarot readers, and palmists in spiritualist movements.<sup>53</sup>

Women participate as ecstatic preachers and they predominate among faith healers in African Independent Churches.<sup>54</sup> In Afro-Brazilian and Afro-Caribbean religions such as Santería, Vodoun, and Candomblé, women are the majority priestesses.<sup>55</sup> As priestesses their duties consist of spiritual healing, mediator of the presence of the spirit and the ability to fall into ecstatic states of spiritual possession.<sup>56</sup> In Korean shamanism, most shamans consist of women.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>51</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>52</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>53</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>54</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>55</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>56</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.

<sup>57</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 592.



### **Comparative History**

The comparative study of religion, when examined with respect for differences, provides a basis for a healthy recognition of the cultural limits of one's own faith and a basis for dialogue across faiths.<sup>58</sup> Max Müller, a Victorian religious scholar, makes the point when he states in his famous formulation to know only one religion is to know none.<sup>59</sup> However, the history of religion has generally been studied from the perspective of comparative religion and historically.<sup>60</sup> Religion examined from the historical perspective is the unfolding of one religious tradition as it relates to economic, social, ecological, and political changes.<sup>61</sup> Respectively, comparative religion contends different religions can be fruitfully compared.<sup>62</sup> These approaches sometimes may overlap and are guilty of framing their research in an univocal (one meaning) conception of religion.<sup>63</sup> These approaches are also critiqued for the following reason: their role played in colonial agenda of Western societies; the Western assumption and belief for an example the soul means the same thing in radically different cultures; the presumption that one religion is more evolved, truer and higher than another; and for excluding the voices and experiences of women.<sup>64</sup> Religion, when studied from the perspective there are many equally valid religions instead of one true religion, allows scholars to identify patterns in

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<sup>58</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 593.

<sup>59</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 593.

<sup>60</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 593.

<sup>61</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 593.

<sup>62</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 593.

<sup>63</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 593.

<sup>64</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 593.

antithetical (contrasted) religions.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, scholars recognize consistent patterns with the religions status of women in antithetical religions.<sup>66</sup> For instance, the envisioning of a single all-powerful male God is the primary theological link and common factor of Judaism and Christianity.<sup>67</sup> The conceptualization of the divine as authorizing a persuasive pattern of suppressing women through the historical record and doctrinal practices is critiqued by some feminists.<sup>68</sup> The historical record indicates the suppression of women in reference to the suppression of goddess religions and in doctrine practices in limiting women's access to positions of prestige as rabbis, priests or imams (the prayer leader in a mosque).<sup>69</sup> Since the late twentieth century, women were provided with a theological basis to participate more fully in their religions due to the work of Christian, Jewish and Muslim feminist scholars.<sup>70</sup>

### **Sacred Texts**

Sacred texts are considered highly regarded and valued in information provided to people about the sacred.<sup>71</sup> Information considered sacred within the sacred texts is inclusive of the following: evocative information, as in myth and story, or ritually and

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<sup>65</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 593.

<sup>66</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 593.

<sup>67</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 593.

<sup>68</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 593.

<sup>69</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 593.

<sup>70</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 593.

<sup>71</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 595.

legally binding as in prescribed ceremonies and law codes.<sup>72</sup> While the content and utilization of sacred texts vary from tradition to tradition and even within a single tradition, they are always perceived as the divine word.<sup>73</sup> The sacred texts content are also perceived as a truthful and powerful opening into the realm of the sacred.<sup>74</sup> Sacred texts are the touchstones (benchmark) of a culture, whether oral or written.<sup>75</sup> Sacred texts tell people, whom they are presenting, something about self-definition and the shaping of consciousness.<sup>76</sup>

Access to sacred texts is a source of power in many cultures and is significant.<sup>77</sup> Therefore, many cultures limit the access to sacred text to men.<sup>78</sup> This is accomplished through the maintenance of a sacred language taught to elite men such as, Hebrew, Latin, Sanskrit, or Arabic.<sup>79</sup> It is also often accomplished by forbidding women to voice sacred words and touch sacred printed text, especially when menstruating.<sup>80</sup> Denying women access to sacred texts denies them the ability to interpret their faith for themselves, to speak with religious authority, and it relegates their religious writings to a secondary, non-sacred realm.<sup>81</sup> The use of vernacular (dialect) languages in religious settings has

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<sup>72</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 595.

<sup>73</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 595.

<sup>74</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 595.

<sup>75</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 595.

<sup>76</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Overview," 595.

<sup>77</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 595.

<sup>78</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 595.

<sup>79</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 595.

<sup>80</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 595.

<sup>81</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 595.

been ameliorated as a barrier to women. The improvement of the barrier to women is especially noticed where the vernacular language has contributed to a reinterpretation of women's religious status and in some cases the development of inclusive language that names women as full member of their religious communities.<sup>82</sup>

A widespread phenomenon is the influence of sacred texts in shaping gender roles.<sup>83</sup> The ideologies of sacred texts continue to exert an enormous influence on people lives because they are intrinsic to the culture in secular societies such as the United States.<sup>84</sup> In the nineteenth century a new wave of women's movement brought about the new reading of sacred texts, such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton's edition of *The Woman's Bible in 1895*.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, this effort at revisionism continues in the twenty-first century on an international scale. In addition, the focus, which began with gender, has expanded to international concerns about race, the influence on colonialism, sexual orientation and additional categories of difference.<sup>86</sup> The search for compositions by women and questioning the presumption of male authorship are other approaches to the analysis of gender in sacred texts.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 595.

<sup>83</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 595.

<sup>84</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 595.

<sup>85</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 595.

<sup>86</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 595.

<sup>87</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 595.

### Contemporary Issues

There is a patriarchal family structure of male authority and female subordination in most of the world's religions.<sup>88</sup> Male dominance and control over the family are an explicit part of many religious teachings.<sup>89</sup> Many Christian fundamentalists utilize biblical texts such as 1 Timothy 2:9-12 and Ephesians 5:22-24 to promote a strict subordination of a wife to her husband. In addition, the texts deny a woman's access to public preaching and ordination. In the New Testament, 1 Timothy 2:9-12 states, women should adorn themselves modestly; they are not permitted to teach or have authority over men and must be quiet in the church.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, Ephesians 5:22-24 states, "wives should be subject in everything to their husbands."<sup>91</sup>

Confucianism traditionally taught women the following four virtues: complete chastity and obedience to superiors, confinement to domestic work, strict cleanliness and ritual speech, and bodily actions of self-abasement and deference.<sup>92</sup> In addition, women were taught the "three submissions": daughter to father, wife to husband, and mother to eldest son (as well as sisters and younger brothers to older brother).<sup>93</sup>

Hinduism also demanded strict adherence and submission of the wife to her husband, daughter to her father, and the widow to her elder son.<sup>94</sup> In Hinduism, if the

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<sup>88</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 597.

<sup>89</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 597.

<sup>90</sup> Bible Gateway, accessed April 11, 2015, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+2%3A9-12&version=NRSV>.

<sup>91</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 597-598.

<sup>92</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 598.

<sup>93</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 598.

<sup>94</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 598.

husband dies before his wife, she is blamed for his death, even if he is many years older than her.<sup>95</sup> A Hindu widow was given the hapless (unfortunate) choices of being burned to death on her husband's funeral pyre (sati) or shaving her head and being treated as sinner seeking forgiveness.<sup>96</sup> This sati continued to occur into the twentieth century in reference to the burning to death and inhumane treatment of widows although this religious ritual became illegal in India in 1829.<sup>97</sup> In addition, self-punishing abasement is traditional in some African religions where women are also blamed if their husband dies.<sup>98</sup>

The primary role of women is to bear children, preferably sons, in patriarchal religions.<sup>99</sup> In other religions such as Hinduism the wife is admonished to bear ten children, preferably sons only.<sup>100</sup> In some religious traditions such as Islamic and Jewish, the wife is divorced if she does not bear a son.<sup>101</sup> In China, a regulation was instituted in 1979 to promote a "one child families," and female fetuses are aborted as parents seek to produce a son.<sup>102</sup> Moreover, the abortion of a female fetus (female feticide) continued into the twenty-first century in India.<sup>103</sup> In some patriarchal religious cultures, family

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<sup>95</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 598.

<sup>96</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 598.

<sup>97</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 598.

<sup>98</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 598.

<sup>99</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 598.

<sup>100</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 598.

<sup>101</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 598.

<sup>102</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 598.

<sup>103</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 598.

violence is pervasive.<sup>104</sup> The men in these cultures believe the laws of their religion give them the right to beat their wives and admonished the wife to avoid angering her husband.<sup>105</sup> In the twenty-first century, multi-religious societies, inclusive of India and Israel, each community is bound by its own religiously based family law. It is not by a legal code common to all citizens.<sup>106</sup> Therefore, religious law plays a major part in family life, especially in some modern societies that define themselves politically as secular.<sup>107</sup>

### **Women's Rights**

Women's human and civil rights are restricted and majorly impacted by family religious law. The family religious law impacts the following areas of a women's life and her ability to choose: marriage, divorce, remarry, protection against violence, and access to economic resources.<sup>108</sup> Women's rights were not acknowledged to be human rights until the late twentieth century in the United Nations meeting.<sup>109</sup> Religious law across many denominations and almost universally have components that circumscribe women's reproduction and sexuality.<sup>110</sup> Additionally, in the twentieth-first century, African societies utilize the ritual practice of clitoridectomy on prepubescent females to preserve

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<sup>104</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 598.

<sup>105</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 598.

<sup>106</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 598.

<sup>107</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 598.

<sup>108</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 599.

<sup>109</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 599.

<sup>110</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 599.

their sexuality for the exclusive use of their future husbands.<sup>111</sup> A clitorrectomy is the cutting and removal of the clitoris and or the stitching of the vulva.<sup>112</sup> The ritual practice of clitorrectomy in traditional Africa was performed for social and spiritual reasons.<sup>113</sup> The practice denotes the female is making a transformation from the death of a girl to a rebirth to womanhood.<sup>114</sup> The painful and debilitating procedure is practiced by Muslims, Christian and indigenous people in sub-Saharan African cultures.<sup>115</sup> Islamic law does not mandate this practice.<sup>116</sup> In these cultures it is assumed the practices is mandated by religious teachings because the people are culturally rooted in patterns of gender relations.<sup>117</sup>

In the twentieth-first century, conservative Protestants and Catholics remain in opposition to artificial forms of birth control and abortion even in the cases of incest and rape.<sup>118</sup> Christian lobbyist proposed different versions of a constitutional amendment defining human life as beginning with conception in 1973. This constitutional amendment defining human life indicates abortion is murder at any stage of gestation.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 599.

<sup>112</sup> Molefi Kete Asante, "Clitorrectomy," in *Encyclopedia of African Religion*, vol. 1, ed. Ama Mazama (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2009), 173.

<sup>113</sup> Asante, "Clitorrectomy," 171.

<sup>114</sup> Asante, "Clitorrectomy," 172.

<sup>115</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 599.

<sup>116</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 599.

<sup>117</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 599.

<sup>118</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 599.

<sup>119</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 599.



Women still suffer discrimination in education throughout the world arguably based on religious laws and culture.<sup>120</sup> Traditionally, religious laws restricted women's knowledge of religion and to teach at higher levels of education. Moreover, women have made tremendous gains in many cultures in reference to access to education in religion and in the secular world.<sup>121</sup> However, women in cultures continue to be prohibited from obtaining an education even at the primary school level in the Taliban in Afghanistan.<sup>122</sup> Malala Yousafzai, at age fifteen, was shot in the head by a Taliban bullet in 2013 because she verbalized the right of girls to be educated.<sup>123</sup> She stated, "I didn't want my future to be imprisoned in my four walls and just cooking and giving birth."<sup>124</sup> Unfortunately, in poorer countries women represent only five percent of college enrollment and two thirds of the world illiterate are female.<sup>125</sup>

### **Ordination of Women**

In many religions women were excluded from the ordained priesthood. In the nineteenth century women were ordained in the following denominations: Unitarians, Universalists, Congregationalists and some Methodists.<sup>126</sup> In addition, in the 1950s and 1960s the United Methodist, Lutherans and Presbyterians, and major Protestant groups

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<sup>120</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 599.

<sup>121</sup> Ruether, "Religion," 599.

<sup>122</sup> Ruether, "Religion," 599.

<sup>123</sup> "Malala: The girl who was shot for going to school," BBC News, accessed May 17, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-24379018>.

<sup>124</sup> "Malala: The girl who was shot for going to school."

<sup>125</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 599.

<sup>126</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 600.

allowed the ordination of women.<sup>127</sup> The Vatican rejected the ordination of women during the late twentieth century to insulate the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>128</sup>

Simultaneously, the lay Catholic women were doing more of their church's grassroots parish ministry.<sup>129</sup> Jewish women in the early twenty-first century were ordained in the rabbinate in all branches of the religion except the Orthodox.<sup>130</sup>

### **Progressive Era and Nineteenth Century 1890-1920**

During the Progressive Era, American history evolved amid the many changes in legislation, social change, audacious innovation, the settlement house movement and neighborhood play grounds.<sup>131</sup> In addition, the Progressive Era is inclusive of the Nineteenth Amendment for women's suffrage, from income tax to the Social Gospel, from the assembly line to the movie theatre.<sup>132</sup> American people's culture, status, and life style could not stall this audacious innovation explosion during this era. Women evangelists were a significant part of institution building during the Progressive Era.<sup>133</sup> During the Progressive Era the evangelical hegemony was fractured with the overwhelming demographics and theological shifts.<sup>134</sup> Firstly, the demographics of

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<sup>127</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 600.

<sup>128</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 600.

<sup>129</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 600.

<sup>130</sup> Ruether, "Religion: Contemporary Issues," 600.

<sup>131</sup> Priscilla Pope-Levison, *Building The Old Time Religion: Women Evangelists in the Progressive Era* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2014), 19.

<sup>132</sup> Pope-Levison, *Building The Old Time Religion*, 19.

<sup>133</sup> Pope-Levison, *Building The Old Time Religion*, 19.

<sup>134</sup> Pope-Levison, *Building The Old Time Religion*, 20.

American life change when a staggering rate of immigrants reached eight thousand people annually.<sup>135</sup> The immigrants arrived with their own style of dress, language, customs and religion, which wreaked havoc on every aspect of American life including religion.<sup>136</sup> In an effort to maintain the “old time religion” of Protestant America and in response to the immigration explosion, evangelicals turned up the exigency of evangelism.<sup>137</sup> Historian William McLoughlin referred to the period as the Third Great Awakening, because evangelism thrived so readily in the Progressive Era.<sup>138</sup> Secondly, the theological shifts emerged from Darwin’s theories of evolution and higher criticism. In the late 1900s educated Americans were reading and learning to accept Charles Darwin scientific rather than providential explanations for the universe as believed by evangelicals.<sup>139</sup> The scientific methods of higher criticism are appropriate for any type of literature, secular and sacred, to the interpretation of the Bible.<sup>140</sup> Protestant ministers were receptive and welcome the higher criticism because scriptures were examined by scientific methods utilized by the scholars of the land.<sup>141</sup> Higher criticism made it easier for pastors to carry on with the validity of preaching and teaching the scriptures.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Pope-Levison, *Building The Old Time Religion*, 20.

<sup>136</sup> Pope-Levison, *Building The Old Time Religion*, 20.

<sup>137</sup> Pope-Levison, *Building The Old Time Religion*, 21.

<sup>138</sup> William G. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform: An Essay on Religion and Social Change in America, 1607-1977* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 141.

<sup>139</sup> Glenna Matthews, *The Rise of Public Woman: Woman’s Power and Woman’s Place in the United States, 1630-1970* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1992), 154.

<sup>140</sup> Pope-Levison, *Building The Old Time Religion*, 21.

<sup>141</sup> Pope-Levison, *Building The Old Time Religion*, 21.

<sup>142</sup> Pope-Levison, *Building The Old Time Religion*, 21.

### Twentieth Century Women's Suffrage: 1901-2000

Prior to the twentieth century women were considered second-class citizens and had to restrict their sphere of interest to family and the home.<sup>143</sup> Professional careers and educational opportunities were not encouraged and easily accessible.<sup>144</sup> Additionally, once a woman married, she could not keep her wages, own her property or sign a contract.<sup>145</sup> Moreover, women were denied the right to vote.<sup>146</sup> Yet, after intense political activity extended over decades in the twentieth century, women gained the right to vote known as women's suffrage.<sup>147</sup> The Women's Convention (WC) contended women's full capabilities in assisting men in social reform.<sup>148</sup> The WC further affirmed that reform would occur "only when women were included in the electoral process."<sup>149</sup> The Women's Suffrage movement was a creditable political movement with its own organizers, financiers, fundraisers, lobbyists, press, political imagery and philosophers.<sup>150</sup> The first woman commander in the American Army supported the women's suffrage in

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<sup>143</sup> National Women's History Museum Presents Rights for Women: The Suffrage Movement and Its Leaders, accessed May 12, 2015, <https://www.nwhm.org/onlineexhibits/rightsforwomen/introduction.html>-Rights for Women.

<sup>144</sup> National Women's History Museum Presents Rights for Women.

<sup>145</sup> National Women's History Museum Presents Rights for Women.

<sup>146</sup> National Women's History Museum Presents Rights for Women.

<sup>147</sup> National Women's History Museum Presents Rights for Women.

<sup>148</sup> Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church 1880-1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 226.

<sup>149</sup> Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent*, 226.

<sup>150</sup> National Women's History Museum Presents Rights for Women.

1904.<sup>151</sup> In addition, this movement to enfranchise women was supported by millions of women over three generations and lasted for over seventy years.<sup>152</sup> The women's suffrage movement was the "largest enfranchisement and extension of democratic rights in our nation's history."<sup>153</sup> In addition to the Civil Rights movement, "the women's suffrage movement should be considered one of the two most important American political movements of the twentieth century."<sup>154</sup>

### **Twenty First Century: 2001-2010**

In the twenty-first century, women's value will not be in becoming more like or imitating men.<sup>155</sup> A women's value will resonate in her ability to honor her femininity and womanhood, while offering wisdom to the world "that is held in this other, vital half of humanity."<sup>156</sup> Men are not the reason or should be blamed for the current state of the world as often heard from bitter feminist around the world.<sup>157</sup> Yet, the hope for the twenty-first century will be "how much women are willing to work with the men to

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<sup>151</sup> Diane Winston, "Women in the Salvation Army," in *Encyclopedia of Women and Religion in North America*: vol. 1, eds. Rosemary Skinner Keller and Rosemary Radford Ruether (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), 413.

<sup>152</sup> National Women's History Museum Presents Rights for Women.

<sup>153</sup> National Women's History Museum Presents Rights for Women.

<sup>154</sup> National Women's History Museum Presents Rights for Women.

<sup>155</sup> Josette S. Shiner, "Unification: Role of Women in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," accessed July 31, 2015, <http://www.unification.net/misc/21-women.html>.

<sup>156</sup> Shiner, "Unification: Role of Women in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century."

<sup>157</sup> Shiner, "Unification: Role of Women in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century."

influence the direction of the world's nations."<sup>158</sup> The world needs individuals with an authentic heart, commitment, and faith in the power of God.<sup>159</sup>

According to an article/blog in the Huffington Post, women should have a sense of self. Women in the twenty-first century should have a strong sense of self to avoid being distracted by other people's perceptions.<sup>160</sup> A woman in the twenty-first century should also have a clear vision, work hard and be confident in order to succeed.<sup>161</sup>

According to the book, *The Sacred Universe*, by Thomas Mary Berry, the main issues confronting the future are to achieve a viable relationship between the natural life systems of the planet and mankind.<sup>162</sup> Ostensibly, human beings are acting for their own benefit, yet in reality they are ruining the conditions for their survival and well-being.<sup>163</sup> Moreover, this applies to both our spiritual and physical survival, "since the inner world of the soul needs to be activated by experience of the outer world in all its grandeur."<sup>164</sup>

Human beings in former times had a capacity for being a creative presence within the ever-renewing sequence of life on earth through their religious traditions.<sup>165</sup> We appear to have lost this capacity at the end of the twentieth century and the dawn of the

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<sup>158</sup> Shiner, "Unification: Role of Women in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century."

<sup>159</sup> Shiner, "Unification: Role of Women in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century."

<sup>160</sup> Zanele Mabaso, "What It Takes To Be A Woman in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," [www.huffingtonpost.com/zanele-mabaso/womens-forum-2013\\_b\\_4194324.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/zanele-mabaso/womens-forum-2013_b_4194324.html), accessed June 20, 2015.

<sup>161</sup> Mabaso, "What It Takes To Be A Woman in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century."

<sup>162</sup> Thomas M. Berry, *The Sacred Universe: Earth, Spirituality and Religion In The Twenty-First Century*, ed. Mary Evelyn Tucker (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2009) 80.

<sup>163</sup> Berry, *The Sacred Universe*, 80.

<sup>164</sup> Berry, *The Sacred Universe*, 80.

<sup>165</sup> Berry, *The Sacred Universe*, 81.

twenty-first century.<sup>166</sup> A degraded outer world leads to an immediate degraded inner world and is now our reality.<sup>167</sup> Religion is born out of the sense of wonder and reverence of the universe.<sup>168</sup> Recognition of the divine as revealed in nature can be found in the teachings of “all the spiritual traditions” of the world as noted in the teachings of Paul in the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans (Rom. 1:20).<sup>169</sup>

Christianity in the twenty-first century is believed to be at one point overtaken by Islam and is increasing at a somewhat higher rate.<sup>170</sup> Feminism will be the end of Christianity as well because it will be a stronger ideology.<sup>171</sup> In addition, it is believed the Mormon religion may become dominate in the “American West by the year 2020.”<sup>172</sup>

Amid the differences of opinion in reference to the role of women in leadership positions in the religious realm, people of faith offer the “greatest reservoir of justice, charity and goodwill in alleviating the unwarranted deprivation and suffering of women and girls.”<sup>173</sup> This includes and is not limited to the following: bishops, popes, mullahs, imams, traditional leaders and their followers who search for inspiration and ideas from a higher authority.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Berry, *The Sacred Universe*, 81

<sup>167</sup> Berry, *The Sacred Universe*, 81.

<sup>168</sup> Berry, *The Sacred Universe*, 82.

<sup>169</sup> Berry, *The Sacred Universe*, 82.

<sup>170</sup> George D. Chryssides and Margaret Z. Wilkins, *Christians in The 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Oakville, CT: Equinox Publishing Ltd., 2011), 447.

<sup>171</sup> Chryssides and Wilkins, *Christians in The 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 447.

<sup>172</sup> Chryssides and Wilkins, *Christians in The 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 47.

<sup>173</sup> Jimmy Carter, *A CALL TO ACTION: Women, Religion, Violence and Power* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 30.

<sup>174</sup> Carter, *A Call To Action*, 30-31.

In conclusions, the issues facing women in religions across the gamete of faiths have not changed much since the beginning of time. The issues women face in their perspective faiths seem overwhelmingly the same whether a woman is practicing her faith in Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism or some other religious traditions. It appears routinely and indiscriminately that women are utilized in the faith communities to do many of the domestic responsibilities of home today in the church. However, it is apparent and important to note from the research done this far that women are beginning to be notice for their unique differences in gender, assets, gifts and abilities to advance the purpose of the church. Women are utilizing their education and gifted abilities to crack the glass ceiling of a patriarch religious system dominated by men. Ironically, it is the men that are beginning to notice the imperative need for women in leadership positions in the religious communities across many religions.

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## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS**

#### **Introduction**

Theology starts and ends with God. God is the creator of the universe. He is the infinite, and omnipresent God inclusive of the Trinity. The writings to follow are an exhaustive compilation of various schools of theological perspectives throughout history. This paper is not inclusive of every theological view, yet it embodies the history and foundation of the Christian/Classical Theology. The Christian/Classical Theology origin and significance to the western world is discussed and supports the foundation of the writings as it relates to the significance of women in ministry. These writings transition from the foundation of theology to major theologians' philosophy during an era when philosophers were convening to settle upon a solid doctrine to live by and believe in at the Council of Nicea. Systematic Theology is discussed as it simplifies and supports the origin of the Trinity and the purpose of each person of the Trinity as it applies to the Christian faith, inclusive of men and women of faith. The transition of philosophical thought continues with the theological views of theologians and emphasizes Jesus as a liberator of women. The Feminist Liberator, Womanist, Womanism, and Womanish theologies are discussed to emphasize the need of inclusiveness and uniqueness of women in a male dominated world of religious beliefs and practices.

Lastly, Practical Theology is defined and the praxis of the theory is demonstrated in the form of prayer and the embodiment of God in the calling of male and female to a personal relationship and purpose in the kingdom.

### **Theology Define**

Theology is derived from the Greek root *theos* meaning God and *logos* meaning word, reason and/or meaning.<sup>1</sup> We could possibly signify theology as a “thoughtful conversation about God.”<sup>2</sup> Theology is defined as the study of religious truths and the nature of God.<sup>3</sup> Theology is inclusive of a system or school of opinions concerning God, religious questions and rational inquiry.<sup>4</sup> In addition, theology is derived from the Greek language and is defined as God and to reason.<sup>5</sup>

Similarly, classical theology consists of a set of beliefs and arguments about religious questions and the nature of God.<sup>6</sup> Classical theology is described as the doctrines and religious beliefs traditionally associated in the Western world with mainstream Christianity.<sup>7</sup> Theologians and Christian churches consider these doctrines and religious beliefs as authoritative. In the Western context, classical theology usually

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony Towey, *An Introduction to Christian Theology: Biblical, Classical and Contemporary* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 4.

<sup>2</sup> Towey, *An Introduction to Christian Theology*, 4.

<sup>3</sup> *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, Houghton Mifflin (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2011), 1805.

<sup>4</sup> *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 1805.

<sup>5</sup> Wise Geek, “What is Classical Theology,” accessed August 28, 2015, <https://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-classical-theology.htm>.

<sup>6</sup> Wise Geek, “What is Classical Theology.”

<sup>7</sup> Wise Geek, “What is Classical Theology.”

means Christian theology.<sup>8</sup> The term classical theology was defined during the early centuries of Christianity at the Council of Nicea in 325 AD and in the writings of Christian theologians such as Saint Augustine of Hippo, Saint Ambrose of Milan and Saint Irenaeus of Lyons.<sup>9</sup> Classical theology has a major influences on the doctrines accepted in the Protestant denominations, Orthodox and Catholic Churches as well as Christianity in the world today.<sup>10</sup>

The Christian/Classical theology believes in a monotheistic God manifested in a Trinitarian form.<sup>11</sup> It is important to note here Catholics and Protestants are Christians and share similarities in their practices, and religious beliefs.<sup>12</sup> They believe and worship a monotheistic God revealed in a Trinitarian form.<sup>13</sup> In addition, Christians believe people are sinners saved from sin by the grace of God through Jesus and profess that the Bible is God's word.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, they regard prayer and worship as significant to their faith and share sacramental practices.<sup>15</sup>

Classical/Christian theology believes God is omnipresent, present everywhere at the same time.<sup>16</sup> God is understood to be transcendent existing beyond human intellect

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<sup>8</sup> Wise Geek, "What is Classical Theology."

<sup>9</sup> Wise Geek, "What is Classical Theology."

<sup>10</sup> Wise Geek, "What is Classical Theology."

<sup>11</sup> "The BOISI Center Papers on Religion in the United States - Boston College," accessed August 29, 2015, [https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/centers/boisi/pdf/bc\\_papers/BCP-Christianity.pdf](https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/centers/boisi/pdf/bc_papers/BCP-Christianity.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> "The BOISI Center Papers on Religion in the United States - Boston College."

<sup>13</sup> "The BOISI Center Papers on Religion in the United States - Boston College."

<sup>14</sup> "The BOISI Center Papers on Religion in the United States - Boston College."

<sup>15</sup> "The BOISI Center Papers on Religion in the United States - Boston College."

<sup>16</sup> "The BOISI Center Papers on Religion in the United States - Boston College."

and experience.<sup>17</sup> Christians believe a personal relationship can be experience with God, yet God remains an infinite mystery beyond human comprehension.<sup>18</sup> In addition, according to classical theology, God is conceived as being omnibenevolent and omniscient.<sup>19</sup> God is eternal inferring he has always existed without a beginning in time.<sup>20</sup> His existence is reference to a property called aseity, stating his existence is not caused by anything else.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, God is conceived as perfect and independent of anything else. Consequently, God is immutable and eternally unchanging.<sup>22</sup> Frances Turretin was a Reformed theologian and a defender of Calvinistic orthodoxy.<sup>23</sup> Turretin's exposition of divine simplicity states, "Since God is the first cause, logic entails God's simplicity."<sup>24</sup> He further states, God is "entirely independent of the creaturely realm, therefore, God's perfection suggests his simplicity."<sup>25</sup> Moreover, God is perfect and immutable.<sup>26</sup> According to Arius, a fourth century priest in Alexandria, Egypt, God is unique, and "unbegotten."<sup>27</sup> He refer to the term "unbegotten" to infer God existed

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<sup>17</sup> "The BOISI Center Papers on Religion in the United States - Boston College."

<sup>18</sup> "The BOISI Center Papers on Religion in the United States - Boston College."

<sup>19</sup> Wise Geek, "What is Classical Theology."

<sup>20</sup> Wise Geek, "What is Classical Theology."

<sup>21</sup> Wise Geek, "What is Classical Theology."

<sup>22</sup> Wise Geek, "What is Classical Theology."

<sup>23</sup> Theopedia, accessed September 5, 2015, <https://www.theopedia.com/francis-turretin>.

<sup>24</sup> Steven J. Duby, "Classical Christian Theism and the Criterion of Particularity: Classical Christian Theism." ed. Paul T. Nimmo, *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 15-16, no. 2 (April 2013): 201.

<sup>25</sup> Duby, "Classical Christian Theism," 201.

<sup>26</sup> Duby, "Classical Christian Theism," 201.

<sup>27</sup> Ronald E. Heine, *Classical Christian Doctrine: Introducing the Essentials of the Ancient Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 70.

eternally; therefore, he did not come into existence because God is without beginning.<sup>28</sup> He further states there is not another being that can share God's qualities.<sup>29</sup> Classical theology views dictate everything in existence is dependent upon God as the only necessary and uncreated being for its existence.<sup>30</sup>

### Trinity

St. Thomas Aquinas was priest, philosopher and theologian from Roccasecca, Italy.<sup>31</sup> Thomas Aquinas is known as the father of Thomistic/philosophical School of theology and one of the influential medieval thinkers of Scholasticism.<sup>32</sup> He is known as a prolific writer and an authority of the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>33</sup> According to Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274), God is not in "one Self," he is three.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, Thomas Aquinas believes the sending of the Son (understood as a real sending down of a cosmic pneumatic being) is the beginning and end of the divine scheme of things.<sup>35</sup> He further states each of the divine "Persons" has a specific function to perform according to his

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<sup>28</sup> Heine, *Classical Christian Doctrine*, 70.

<sup>29</sup> Heine, *Classical Christian Doctrine*, 70.

<sup>30</sup> Wise Geek, "What is Classical Theology."

<sup>31</sup> Biography, accessed September 5, 2015, <https://www.biography.com/people/st-thomas-aquinas-9187231>-Thomas Aquinas-Theologian, Philosopher, Priest, Saint-Biography.com.

<sup>32</sup> Biography, accessed September 5, 2015, <https://www.biography.com/people/st-thomas-aquinas-9187231>-Thomas Aquinas-Theologian, Philosopher, Priest, Saint-Biography.com.

<sup>33</sup> Biography, accessed September 5, 2015, <https://www.biography.com/people/st-thomas-aquinas-9187231>-Thomas Aquinas-Theologian, Philosopher, Priest, Saint-Biography.com.

<sup>34</sup> Marian Hillar, *From LOGOS to TRINITY: The Evolution of Religious Beliefs from Pythagoras to Tertullian* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012.), 249.

<sup>35</sup> Hillar, *From LOGOS to TRINITY*, 249.

character.<sup>36</sup> In addition, the purpose and the fruit of human life is the knowledge of the Trinity.<sup>37</sup> Leonardo Boff is a liberation theologian which states reflection on the Trinity summons all of our human concepts into question.<sup>38</sup> He further states, we should avoid causal terminology when referencing the three Persons of the trinity.<sup>39</sup> He suggests instead we should use the language of recognition and revelation in which the three persons revealed themselves.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, the relationship amongst the trinity is “reciprocal participation instead of hypostatic derivation, of correlation and communion, rather than production and procession.”<sup>41</sup> Each person of the trinity is the “condition for the revelation of the others.”<sup>42</sup> Therefore, according to Boff, they are what they are because of the intrinsic and infinite communion amongst them.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, R. Kendall Soulen observes, “a special affinity exist between each person of the Trinity.”<sup>44</sup> In addition, Soulen states, the first person of the trinity declares the divine name with the manifestation of a divine uniqueness, the second with the enactment of divine presence, and third with a gift of divine blessing.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Hillar, *From LOGOS to TRINITY*, 249.

<sup>37</sup> Hillar, *From LOGOS to TRINITY*, 249.

<sup>38</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *God in Three Persons: A Contemporary Interpretation of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 303.

<sup>39</sup> Erickson, *God in Three Persons*, 304.

<sup>40</sup> Erickson, *God in Three Persons*, 304.

<sup>41</sup> Erickson, *God in Three Persons*, 304-305.

<sup>42</sup> Erickson, *God in Three Persons*, 305.

<sup>43</sup> Erickson, *God in Three Persons*, 305.

<sup>44</sup> Martha L. Moore-Keish, “The Divine Name(s) and the Holy Trinity: Distinguishing the Voices,” *Interpretation A Journal of Bible and Theology* 69, no. 3 (July 2015): 354.

<sup>45</sup> Moore-Keish, “The Divine Name(s) and the Holy Trinity,” 354.

Classical theology views God as a single being manifested in a trinity. The trinity consists of three equal persons called the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.<sup>46</sup> The trinity possesses the same divine attributes and are believed to be distinct.<sup>47</sup> The three persons are omnipotent, perfect and eternal.<sup>48</sup>

### Christology

Christology is the study concerning the person of Jesus Christ and the nature of his relationship to God, specifically his divinity.<sup>49</sup> The Council of Nicaea adopted the Nicæan Creed in 325 C.E. in its shorter version inclusive of Chalcedon's "Definition of the Faith." The creed emphasized Jesus' true divinity and his relation to God. It states, "We believe in . . . one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father."<sup>50</sup> Moreover, Chalcedon's "Definition of the Faith" emphasized his full humanity.<sup>51</sup> It states in its adopted version,

We confess one and the same Son, who is our Lord Jesus Christ, and we all agree in teaching that this very same Son is complete in his deity and complete-the very same-in humanity, truly God and truly a human being, co-essential with the Father as to his deity and co-essential with us, the very same one-as to humanity, being like us in every respect apart from sin . . . one and the same Christ, Son,

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<sup>46</sup> Wise Geek, "What is Classical Theology."

<sup>47</sup> Wise Geek, "What is Classical Theology."

<sup>48</sup> Wise Geek, "What is Classical Theology."

<sup>49</sup> Martinus C. de Boer, "Christology," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Theology*, vol. 1, ABR-JUS, ed. Samuel E. Balentine (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 131.

<sup>50</sup> Richard A. Norris Jr., trans. and ed., *The Christological Controversy: Sources of Early Christian Thought* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1980), 157.

<sup>51</sup> de Boer, "Christology," 131.

Lord, Only Begotten, acknowledged to be unconfused, unalterably, undividedly, inseparably in two natures.<sup>52</sup>

In the same regard, Saint Maximus was a Greek theologian monk of the seventh century from Constantinople.<sup>53</sup> He was trained in “Greek literature, late antique philosophical discourse and dialectics.”<sup>54</sup> Maximus states, “Christ is divine in a human way, and human in a divine way.”<sup>55</sup> In the writings of Paul in the Bible, he seems to prefer “God” and “Lord” instead of “Father” and “Son.”<sup>56</sup> Paul being raised as a strict Jew, therefore in his Jewish teachings, the term “Lord” would be equivalent to “God.”<sup>57</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer states, Christ has revealed himself to the church as the “human Logos,” the word of God.<sup>58</sup> He further states, when you ask the question “Who is Jesus Christ,” the answer is the “Logos of God.”<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Norris, *The Christological Controversy*, 159.

<sup>53</sup> Behind the Name, accessed September 11, 2015, <http://www.behindthename.com/name/maximus>.

<sup>54</sup> Khaled Anatolios, *The Holy Trinity in the Life of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 83.

<sup>55</sup> *On the Two Wills in Christ* 7 (in Kotter, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, 4:184). quoted in Khaled Anatolios, ed., *The Holy Trinity in the Life of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 94.

<sup>56</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Making Sense of the Trinity: Three Crucial Questions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 88.

<sup>57</sup> Erickson, *Making Sense of the Trinity*, 88.

<sup>58</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Who Is Christ for Us?*, edited and translated by Renate Wind and Craig Nesson (Minneapolis, MN: First Fortress Press, 2002), 33.

<sup>59</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Who is Christ for Us?*, 33.



## Pneumatology

The adjective “holy” refers to the divine spirit i.e. the Spirit of God. The term *ruakh* in Hebrew translates to “spirit,” and the term *pneuma* in Greek translates to “wind,” and or “breath,” which denote a life-giving element.<sup>60</sup> The English word “spirit” is an Anglicized form of the Latin word for breath (*spiritus*).<sup>61</sup> Breath is a miniature wind metaphorically, which emphasize the essential meaning of breath/spirit because breath is essential to life.<sup>62</sup> The Holy Spirit is the presence or mysterious power of God that operates within communities and individuals empowering or inspiring them with qualities they routinely would not possess.<sup>63</sup> There should be a narrowing of the gap between Christology and pneumatology according to Christopher Holmes.<sup>64</sup> His essay suggests narrowing the gap between the two with the consequence that *paraenesis*/moral instruction is not a non-Christological add-on; instead, it is “Spirit accomplished activation of ‘Christ’s cross in the life of the Christian community’”.<sup>65</sup> Karl Barth was an important Swiss theologian of the twentieth century.<sup>66</sup> He is amongst the greatest thinkers of Christendom.<sup>67</sup> Barth’s concept of the Threefold Word of God has a Christological

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<sup>60</sup> Mark Allan Powell, ed., *Harper Collins Bible Dictionary With the Society of Biblical Literature: Holy Spirit* (New, NY: Harper Collins Publishers, 2011), 386-387.

<sup>61</sup> Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan, ed., *The Oxford Guide to Ideas & Issues of the Bible: Holy Spirit* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc. 2001), 202.

<sup>62</sup> Metzger and Coogan, *The Oxford Guide to Ideas & Issues of the Bible*, 202.

<sup>63</sup> *Harper Collins Bible Dictionary With the Society of Biblical Literature: Holy Spirit*, 386-387.

<sup>64</sup> J. Louis Martin, “Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology: With and Beyond,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 17, no. 3 (July 2015): 332.

<sup>65</sup> J. Louis Martin, “Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology: With and Beyond,” 332.

<sup>66</sup> “Karl Barth,” accessed September 22, 2015, <http://barth.ptsem.edu/karl-barth/biography>.

<sup>67</sup> “Karl Barth,” accessed September 22, 2015, <http://barth.ptsem.edu/karl-barth/biography>.

emphasis with a pneumatology dimension. Furthermore, he believes the Holy Spirit is the bond of union during the event of proclamation, dynamically connecting the voice of God to the ears and voices of the Christian community.<sup>68</sup> In addition, it is the Holy Spirit that validates “God’s own work,

the work of faith which, is proclaimed in words of human thought and expression on the lips of the preacher and in the ears of the here and now, thus turning the preached promise into the event of real promise that is given to the church.<sup>69</sup>

Therefore, the word of God, the Holy Spirit and God, are also one in the event of proclamation.<sup>70</sup> Lastly, Barth states, the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christians and their communities is the activity and life of God “after He has become man in Christ for us.”<sup>71</sup>

### **Thomas Aquinas 13<sup>th</sup> Century (1224-1274)**

Thomas Aquinas was a respected theologian of the Latin Church in the middle ages. Pope Leo XIII declared his works normative, a standard of correctness for the teaching of theology in the Roman Catholic schools in 1879.<sup>72</sup> Thomas Aquinas is one of four of the most influential theologians of history.<sup>73</sup> Aquinas is significantly known as the

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<sup>68</sup> Thomas Christian Currie, *The Only Sacrament Left to Us: The Threefold Word of God in the Theology and Ecclesiology of Karl Barth* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2015), 30.

<sup>69</sup> Currie, *The Only Sacrament Left to Us*, 30.

<sup>70</sup> Currie, *The Only Sacrament Left to Us*, 32.

<sup>71</sup> Currie, *The Only Sacrament Left to Us*, 35.

<sup>72</sup> K. Froehlich, “Thomas Aquinas 1224/25 – 1274,” in *Dictionary of Major Biblical Interpreters*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2007), 979.

<sup>73</sup> Timothy M. Renick, *Aquinas for Armchair Theologians* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 1.

systematic theologian whose synthesis of Christian faith and Aristotelianism represented the high point of medieval scholastic theology.<sup>74</sup> His writings were derived from his assignments as a theological expert and academic teacher.<sup>75</sup> His *Summa Theologiae*, was originally designed as a text book for his students at Santa Sabina, and his *Summa Contra Gentiles*, was a disputed miscellaneous treaties, expert opinions, and questions.<sup>76</sup> Both documents were widely studied and copied throughout the middle ages and beyond.<sup>77</sup>

Aquinas believed a woman is subordinate to a man due to her position as a helper in the process of procreation.<sup>78</sup> Therefore, according to Aquinas, a man is the superior sex. He further states, the distinction of the man and woman anatomy emphasizes the difference in the sexes; therefore, a woman cease to exist as a woman in her function as a helpmate. In Aquinas words, “the end of a woman’s existence as *mulier* (Latin for woman) is her function as helpmate.”<sup>79</sup> According to Aquinas, the term “helpmate” is not stipulated as to assist a man in his work; it is inferred to mean a woman is a helpmate to assist a man with procreation. Moreover, another man is suitable to help a man in his work of labors rather than a woman according to Aquinas.<sup>80</sup> He further states, if man desires an intellectual helpmate, he is better served by selecting a male because women

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<sup>74</sup> Froehlich, “Thomas Aquinas 1224/25 – 1274,” 980.

<sup>75</sup> Froehlich, “Thomas Aquinas 1224/25 – 1274,” 980.

<sup>76</sup> Froehlich, “Thomas Aquinas 1224/25 – 1274,” 980.

<sup>77</sup> Froehlich, “Thomas Aquinas 1224/25 – 1274,” 980.

<sup>78</sup> Kari Elisabeth Børresen, *Subordination and Equivalence: The Nature and Role of Woman in Augustine and Thomas Aquinas* (Kampen, the Netherlands: Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1995), 171.

<sup>79</sup> Børresen, *Subordination and Equivalence*, 171.

<sup>80</sup> Børresen, *Subordination and Equivalence*, 157.

are by nature unable to serve intellectually.<sup>81</sup> Woman was created to preserve the human race in reference to the plan of Creation according to the philosophical thoughts of Aquinas.<sup>82</sup> It is important to stipulate Thomas Aquinas lived during a male dominant era, which excluded women from all intellectual and educational pursuits.<sup>83</sup> This was the era he lived and breathed with little to no contact with women, which is not necessarily indicative of God's plan and or intentions for women.<sup>84</sup>

### **Martin Luther**

Martin Luther was a German pastor, monk, professor and reformer.<sup>85</sup> Martin Luther was born in Eisleben, Germany, in 1483 and was mostly unknown during his early years as a monk and scholar.<sup>86</sup> Yet, in 1517, Martin Luther penned a document titled "Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences," also known as "The 95 Theses," which accused the Catholic Church of selling "indulgences" to absolve/set someone free of sin.<sup>87</sup> Luther was committed to the idea that salvation is obtained by divine grace and through faith.<sup>88</sup> The "95 Theses" consisted of a list of propositions and questions for

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<sup>81</sup> Renick, *Aquinas for Armchair Theologians*, 118.

<sup>82</sup> Børresen, *Subordination and Equivalence*, 158.

<sup>83</sup> Renick, *Aquinas for Armchair Theologians*, 121.

<sup>84</sup> Renick, *Aquinas for Armchair Theologians*, 121.

<sup>85</sup> Timothy J. Wengert, ed., introduction to *The Pastoral Luther: Essays on Martin Luther's Practical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 2.

<sup>86</sup> "Martin Luther and the 95 Theses-Facts & Summary," HISTORY.com, accessed September 30, 2015, <https://www.history.com/topics/martin-luther-and-the-95-theses>.

<sup>87</sup> "Martin Luther and the 95 Theses-Facts & Summary."

<sup>88</sup> "Martin Luther and the 95 Theses-Facts & Summary."

debate which eventually led to the foundation for the Protestant Reformation.<sup>89</sup> In his sermon, “A Sermon on the Estate of Marriage” in 1519, Luther shares the significance of marriage in which God gives this gift only to human beings versus the other animals.<sup>90</sup> God demonstrates the importance of the relationship of marriage in the care he gives in creating Eve for Adam.<sup>91</sup> Luther’s ideology states women were created by their nature to be inferior to men.<sup>92</sup> He further believes through his writings in reference to the book of Genesis, it was through their participation in the Fall (Adam and Eve) that women became subordinate to their husbands.<sup>93</sup> In addition, Luther believes the woman is to give her husband love, honor and obedience.<sup>94</sup> According to his thoughts and aligned with the theology of his times, Luther states, women should be in the home (her sphere) and it is the reason she was created with “large hips” to sit on them in the home.<sup>95</sup> Moreover, he believes Eve was approached by the devil first because of her vulnerability to

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<sup>89</sup> “Martin Luther and the 95 Theses-Facts & Summary.”

<sup>90</sup> Jane E. Strohl, “A Sermon on the Estate of Marriage, in *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther’s Theology: Luther on Marriage, Sexuality, and The Family*, eds. Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel and L’ubomír Batka (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014), 371.

<sup>91</sup> Strohl, “A Sermon on the Estate of Marriage, 371.

<sup>92</sup> Susan C. Karant-Nunn and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, eds., and trans. *Luther On Women: A Sourcebook* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 15.

<sup>93</sup> Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks, *Luther On Women*, 15.

<sup>94</sup> Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1950), 299.

<sup>95</sup> Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks, *Luther On Women*, 15.

temptation.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, Luther states in his writings the devil attacked Adam and Eve's uncorrupted nature: "their faith in the word and good will of God."<sup>97</sup>

### **Feminist Theology**

Feminist theologians raise important questions in reference to the disproportionate presence of patriarchal language about God in Christian theology and the Bible.<sup>98</sup> There is a need for sensitivity in reference to our conversations about God. Some scholars reject the male dominated language of God.<sup>99</sup> Others focus on gender-neutral metaphors and feminine imagery in the biblical tradition.<sup>100</sup>

The feminist theory of social equality practice is referred to as Feminist Theology.<sup>101</sup> Feminist believed the traditional religion is often practiced from a male's perspective, which is considered unjust towards women.<sup>102</sup> Sarah Grimke, an abolitionist and lecturer, suggested in 1837 that the biblical interpretation of the Bible was intentionally biased against women to keep them in subjection.<sup>103</sup> She strongly recommended women to investigate the sacred texts for themselves and become trained

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<sup>96</sup> Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks, *Luther On Women*, 15.

<sup>97</sup> Kiyeong Chang, *The Theologies of the Law in Martin Luther and John Wesley* (Lexington, KY: Emeth Press, 2014), 194.

<sup>98</sup> de Boer, "Christology," 425.

<sup>99</sup> de Boer, "Christology," 425.

<sup>100</sup> de Boer, "Christology," 425.

<sup>101</sup> June Melby Benowitz, "Feminist Theology," in *The Encyclopedia of American Women and Religion*, ed. June Melby Benowitz (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 1998), 115.

<sup>102</sup> Benowitz, *The Encyclopedia of American Women and Religion*, 115.

<sup>103</sup> George S. Hendry, "Holy Spirit," in *The Oxford Guide to Ideas & Issues of the Bible: Feminism and the Bible*, eds. Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2001), 164.

as scholars.<sup>104</sup> Sara Grimke utilizes the ethical system in which Jesus taught to base her claims to the equality of the sexes.<sup>105</sup> In her view the ethical system Jesus taught is revealed to man in the direct revelation of the sacred Scriptures.<sup>106</sup> Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a feminist theologian, assumed the challenge of examining scriptural arguments for traditional views of women along with other women.<sup>107</sup>

Feminist Theology began during 1895-1898 with the publication of *The Women's Bible* by Elizabeth Cady Stanton.<sup>108</sup> The publication of the *Women's Bible* propelled an exponentially increase of published literature examining the Bible and centuries of biblical interpretations by male scholars during the nineteenth century.<sup>109</sup> This expansion of published material surpassed the output of books and literature during the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>110</sup> The feminist cause is important to human liberation as a whole because it focuses our attention to a change of values from those of patriarchy, asserts Radford Ruether, a prominent theologian within mainstream feminism.<sup>111</sup> The values of a patriarchy system consist of domination, possession and conquest. Feminism values consist of reciprocity and acceptance of mutual limitations.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Hendry, "Holy Spirit," 164.

<sup>105</sup> Bonnie Greene, "Women's Viewpoint," in *North American Reference Encyclopedia of Women's Liberation*, ed William White Jr. (Philadelphia, PA: North American Publishing Co., 1972), 116.

<sup>106</sup> Greene, "Women's Viewpoint," 116.

<sup>107</sup> Hendry, "Holy Spirit," 164.

<sup>108</sup> Benowitz, "Feminist," 115.

<sup>109</sup> Hendry, "Holy Spirit," 164.

<sup>110</sup> Hendry, "Holy Spirit," 164.

<sup>111</sup> Benowitz, "Feminist," 115.

<sup>112</sup> Benowitz, "Feminist," 115.

### Feminist Liberator

It is important to note Jesus Christ was the “greatest liberator of women in a society where they were considered throughout biblical history to be inferior,” according to former President Jimmy Carter.<sup>113</sup> He further states, “there is one inconvertible fact concerning the relationship between Jesus Christ and Women: Jesus treated women as equal to men.”<sup>114</sup> Furthermore, Jesus treated women and men as equals during a time which was dramatically different in reference to customs and the treatment of women.<sup>115</sup> Christian Theology reveals a vivid indication of the special status of women as depicted in the exaltation and later devotion to Mary, as Jesus’ mother.<sup>116</sup> Jesus had no hesitancy in reference to conversing at the community well with a Samaritan woman despite strict prohibition against a Jewish man dealing with women in public.<sup>117</sup> Jesus conversed with the Samaritan at the well who was a pariah both among Jews and her peers because of her lascivious behavior and ethnicity.<sup>118</sup> She is the first example of an evangelical witness because she accepted him as the promised Messiah and took his message back to her village.<sup>119</sup> Jesus granted a pardon and forgiveness to a guilty and condemned woman as he simultaneously rejected the double standard of punishment for adultery.<sup>120</sup> Jesus is not

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<sup>113</sup> Jimmy Carter, *A CALL TO ACTION: Women, Religion, Violence and Power* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 22.

<sup>114</sup> Carter, *A CALL TO ACTION*, 23.

<sup>115</sup> Carter, *A CALL TO ACTION*, 23.

<sup>116</sup> Carter, *A CALL TO ACTION*, 23.

<sup>117</sup> Carter, *A CALL TO ACTION*, 23.

<sup>118</sup> Carter, *A CALL TO ACTION*, 23.

<sup>119</sup> Carter, *A CALL TO ACTION*, 23.

<sup>120</sup> Carter, *A CALL TO ACTION*, 23.



discussed in the four Gospels written by men as condoning sexual discrimination or the implied inferiority or subservience of women.<sup>121</sup>

Susan Newman, author of “Oh God,” asserts that Jesus changed the conversation concerning women and he elevated the status of women.<sup>122</sup> His behavior acknowledged a woman’s place in the kingdom of God.<sup>123</sup> Newman, concurring with the writings of Jimmy Carter in reference to how Jesus talked to women, responded to their touch, healed them, received their emotional and financial support, even at the risk of censure from the male-oriented culture of Judaism.<sup>124</sup> Jesus recognized women’s potential for intelligent thought and commitment during a time when women were not allowed to serve as a rabbi or disciple.<sup>125</sup> Consequently, his birth occurred in a manner that defies the traditional, ethical, and religious norms of that day.<sup>126</sup> Jesus’ birth, as exemplified through a woman, his mother Mary, was doing the unexpected and accomplishing what seemed impossible to take care of him during tumultuous times.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Carter, *A CALL TO ACTION*, 23.

<sup>122</sup> Susan Newman, *OH GOD: A Black Woman’s Guide to Sex and Spirituality* (New York, NY: The Ballantine Publishing Group, 2002), 42.

<sup>123</sup> Newman, *OH GOD*, 43.

<sup>124</sup> Newman, *OH GOD*, 43.

<sup>125</sup> Newman, *OH GOD*, 43.

<sup>126</sup> Newman, *OH GOD*, 52-53.

<sup>127</sup> Newman, *OH GOD*, 53.

### Womanist, Womanism and Womanish Theology

The terms that are associated with the varied conditions of black women are Womanist, Womanism and Womanish.<sup>128</sup> Firstly, Womanist theology is defined as a response to racism in feminist theology and to sexism in black theology.<sup>129</sup> The term womanist “distinguishes a black woman experience from a feminist’s experiences.”<sup>130</sup> The womanist acknowledges the cultural and heritage of black women, their particular experiences and resistance to systems of domination.<sup>131</sup> In addition, the womanist insists on the liberty and self-determination of all people.<sup>132</sup> A womanist is someone that is an advocate of women’s equity, interests, and enrichment within familial, community, education, political, religious, social relationships, and institutions.<sup>133</sup> Secondly, womanism refers to gender traits or identify political/social consciousness as conventionally employed in the black culture.<sup>134</sup> Moreover, womanism represents an experience and expectation of female competence, knowledge and responsibilities that are beyond the gender traits traditionally assigned to females in Western culture.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Deborah K. King, “Womanist, Womanism, Womanish,” in *Women’s Studies Encyclopedia Views from the Sciences*, vol. 1, ed. Helen Tierney (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, Inc., 1989), 389.

<sup>129</sup> Monica A. Coleman, *Making a Way Out of No Way: A Womanist Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008), 6.

<sup>130</sup> Dale P. Andrews, “African American Practical Theology,” in *Opening the Field of Practical Theology: An Introduction*, eds. Kathleen A. Cahalan and Gordon S. Mikoski (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 20.

<sup>131</sup> King, “Womanist, Womanism, Womanish,” 390.

<sup>132</sup> King, “Womanist, Womanism, Womanish,” 390.

<sup>133</sup> King, “Womanist, Womanism, Womanish,” 389-390.

<sup>134</sup> King, “Womanist, Womanism, Womanish,” 389.

<sup>135</sup> King, “Womanist, Womanism, Womanish,” 389.

Thirdly, womanish represents an orientation and attitude towards life which is displayed as self-confidence and opinionated.<sup>136</sup>

### **African American Female Religious Leadership**

Early nineteenth century African American women ministers often labored diligently and served as traveling evangelists.<sup>137</sup> Sojourner Truth's oratory was appropriately famous; thereafter, other women of the early nineteenth century followed such as Maria Stewart, Jarena Lee, and Zilpha Elaw.<sup>138</sup> These women served God and his people as preachers; however, they were never ordained as ministers.<sup>139</sup> African American women sought and obtained formal ordination from their denominations during the postbellum years.<sup>140</sup> Sarah Ann Hines was ordained in 1885 in the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church by Bishop Henry McNeal Turner.<sup>141</sup> Her ordination, however, was revoked due to the complaints of male pastors two year later.<sup>142</sup> The AME Church ordained another woman, Rebecca Glover, sixty three years later.<sup>143</sup> Moreover, the controversy with the AME Church did not prevent the ordination of Mary J. Smalls and Julia A. J. Foote in 1900 and 1894 respectively by the African Methodist Episcopal Zion

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<sup>136</sup> King, "Womanist, Womanism, Womanish," 389.

<sup>137</sup> Stephen W. Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," in *Reference Library of Black America*, vol.3, ed. Jeffrey Lehman (Farmington Hills, MI: The Gale Group, Inc., 2003), 762.

<sup>138</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 762.

<sup>139</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 762.

<sup>140</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 762.

<sup>141</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 762.

<sup>142</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 762.

<sup>143</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 762.

Church.<sup>144</sup> In addition, Pauli Murray became the first African American woman to be ordained a priest in the predominately white Episcopal Church. She was a distinguished lawyer and educator.<sup>145</sup> In the history of the Episcopal Church, Barbara Harris became the first woman Bishop.<sup>146</sup>

Throughout American history, women's temperance and missionary societies were para-ecclesiastical structures many African American women utilize to exercise their ministries.<sup>147</sup> In addition, others such as Frances Jackson Coppin and Anna Cooper became renowned educators in the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC).<sup>148</sup>

### **Jarena Lee (1783-1849) Women's Rights Activist, Minister**

Jarena Lee was born in Cape May, New Jersey, in 1783. She worked as a servant for a family near Philadelphia and accepted her call to ministry in approximately 1808.<sup>149</sup> She was licensed as a preacher in 1817 by Richard Allen.<sup>150</sup> She traveled throughout the North and Midwest to preach and her eloquent preaching moved many people.<sup>151</sup> She continued her preaching ministry although she was often denied the opportunity to preach

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<sup>144</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 762-763.

<sup>145</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 763.

<sup>146</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 763.

<sup>147</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 763.

<sup>148</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 763.

<sup>149</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 785.

<sup>150</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 785.

<sup>151</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 785.

from the pulpit of many African Methodist Episcopal preachers.<sup>152</sup> Jarena Lee was considered a courageous foremother and model for church activism amongst African American women within the African Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>153</sup>

### **Vashti Murphy McKenzie (1947-) Clergy**

Vashti Murphy was raised in Baltimore, Maryland, and was born on May 28, 1947.<sup>154</sup> She married a professional basketball player, Stan McKenzie, while attending Morgan State University. Vashti Murphy McKenzie accepted her calling in her thirties.<sup>155</sup> She earned a Master of Divinity degree from Howard University and later earned a Doctor of Ministry degree from United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio.<sup>156</sup> Vashti McKenzie became the first female pastor of Payne Memorial AME Church in Baltimore, Md.<sup>157</sup> The church grew from three hundred to approximately seventeen hundred members and established fifteen new ministries during her tenure.<sup>158</sup> Vashti Murphy McKenzie was elected as the first female bishop in the two hundred and thirteen year

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<sup>152</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 785.

<sup>153</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 786.

<sup>154</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 786.

<sup>155</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 787.

<sup>156</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 787.

<sup>157</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 787.

<sup>158</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 787.

history of the AME Church on July 11, 2000.<sup>159</sup> Bishop McKenzie leads the 10th Episcopal District in the AME Church.<sup>160</sup>

### **Katie Cannon (1950 -) Presbyterian Minister, Educator, Feminist**

Katie Cannon was born in Kannapolis, North Carolina, on January 3, 1950.<sup>161</sup> Cannon grew up in an era in her community in which an African American woman's vocational options were to be employed as a local mill worker or schoolteacher.<sup>162</sup> She graduated with a B. S. in 1971 and was on the dean's list at Barber-Scotia College.<sup>163</sup> Her scholarly achievements earned her the title Miss Barber-Scotia.<sup>164</sup> She majored in Old Testament studies and received her M. S. Degree in Divinity in 1974 at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia.<sup>165</sup> Cannon served as pastor at the Ascension Presbyterian Church in New York City and administrator at the New York Theological Seminary.<sup>166</sup> She later received her Ph.D. in philosophy in 1993 at Union Theological Seminary. Katie Cannon serves as the associate professor of Christian ethics at Temple University as of 1993.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 787.

<sup>160</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 787.

<sup>161</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 780.

<sup>162</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 780.

<sup>163</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 780.

<sup>164</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 780.

<sup>165</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 780.

<sup>166</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 780.

<sup>167</sup> Angell, "African American Female Religious Leaders," 780.

## Practical Theology

Practical Theology is defined as a “theory of action” and the “empirically oriented theological theory of the mediation of the Christian faith in the praxis of modern society.”<sup>168</sup> Practical theology is reclaiming a reintegration of theology woven into the fabric of human living in which theology becomes a “practice” and a way of life.<sup>169</sup> Practical Theology is when the Christian community, for example, engages in the practices of study, prayer and forgiveness in which we become entrenched in reference to what it means to be a people of God with a deeper understanding of the kingdom of God.<sup>170</sup> Martin Buber, the great philosopher, suggests that when we pray, “we do not remove ourselves or our lives from our prayer; rather we bring our very lives to our prayer.”<sup>171</sup> Prayer allows us to refer and yield our lives to God and position us to listen.<sup>172</sup> As we seek to align ourselves with God’s heart, will, and intentions for the world, we experience an amazing transformation through prayer.<sup>173</sup> In the transformation we experience a calling from God and God is referring to us individually and collectively. In our mortal state, we are chosen, required, referred to, sent and empowered according to Martin Buber.<sup>174</sup> The example Buber gives embodies the praxis and theory

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<sup>168</sup> Gerben Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action*, trans. Reinder Bruinsma (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993), 6.

<sup>169</sup> Terry A. Velting, *Practical Theology: On Earth as It Is in Heaven* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), 3.

<sup>170</sup> Velting, *Practical Theology*, 4.

<sup>171</sup> Velting, *Practical Theology*, 9.

<sup>172</sup> Velting, *Practical Theology*, 9-10.

<sup>173</sup> Velting, *Practical Theology*, 10.

<sup>174</sup> Velting, *Practical Theology*, 10.

of Practical Theology. Moreover, according to Emanuel Levinas, a Jewish philosopher, Practical Theology shows a preference for the neighbor who is close to us, the stranger in our midst, for the one who pleads for mercy and or cries out for justice, and for the one who says, “Love should be put into action!”<sup>175</sup>

### **Conclusion**

In concluding, the exhaustive research of the history of women in ministry gives a vivid and detail examination of the historical background of the devaluation of the role of women in ministry and society. The research of theology reveals an imminent need for the empowerment and inclusiveness of women in leadership positions and a liberating environment in the church. Being that Jesus was a liberator of women, who are we to oppress one another. Women in ministry in the twenty-first century are serving in thousands of churches across the country. Our resources, monetary support, education, skills, and abilities are utilized as we answer the calling of God to serve in ministry/churches. Therefore, it is imperative to turn the tides and support, nurture, empower and acknowledge women in leadership roles in the church. The research above demonstrates the tenacity and abilities of women who were forerunners and game changers in tumultuous and difficult times answering the call of God to serve in ministry. Without a prophetic voice and praxis within our theology, our service to God is merely pious activity and a loud clanging of a gong in the church.

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<sup>175</sup> Veling, *Practical Theology*, 10.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS**

#### **Introduction**

A theoretical perspective is discussed throughout this document depicting the challenges women continue to face throughout centuries to the present. American history reveals women are repeatedly accused of stepping out of their respective domesticated places in the home and in other areas of society. Across cultures, locally and internationally, women are mistreated, oppressed and ostracized in the home, corporate America and in their respective places of worship. Research throughout this academic process reveals this hideous preposterous treatment of women across all cultures, barriers and religions in the country and universally. Unfortunately, this type of treatment befalls on women of color in double and even more massive portions due to gender and race.

In addition, models of ministry are described and contemporary disciplines are themes that are woven into this document. America's histories of women are carefully discussed in the varied disciplines in addition to the struggles of women. Joys are revealed as well. Women are prevailing in corporate America throughout the country due to the work of activists, improved laws, federal regulations and the hard work of courageous men and women. This document discusses the progress of women in society and the distance women must continue to travel and persevere beyond in the midst of success. The distance is inclusive of inequality in salaries, employment opportunities,

mentors, laboratory space, funding of major projects, organizational connections, empowerment opportunities, education and leadership roles in varied disciplines inclusive of religion. It is the purpose of this author to shed light on the stigma which continue to plague women in the twenty-first century from a theoretical perspective.

### **Models for Ministry**

There are various models of ministries which range from traditional models (mainline, evangelical, charismatic), mega-church model (cell-based), Willow Creek model (seeker-targeted) and Saddleback model (purpose driven).<sup>1</sup>

The Saddleback Church model was developed and implemented by Dr. Rick Warren and compiled in his book *The Purpose Driven Church*. The Saddleback model describes building a church around the following five purposes: Worship - loving God; Ministry-loving your neighbor; Evangelism-making disciples; Fellowship-baptizing/teaching; and Discipleship-helping people to become more like Christ.<sup>2</sup> Rick Warren asserts Saddleback Church is committed to the idea in which “vibrant churches in the twenty-first century must be wholeheartedly committed to conversion growth.”<sup>3</sup> He believes churches should start to think like an unbeliever, utilizing relevant and

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<sup>1</sup> Larry Hart, “Models for Ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” *Ministry Today Magazine*, October 31, 2001, accessed January 6, 2016, <http://ministrytodaymag.com/index.php/ministry-today-archives/66-unorganized/1478-models-for-ministry-in-the-21st-century>.

<sup>2</sup> Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message & Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 103.

<sup>3</sup> Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 12.

contemporary methods. The methods utilize should not compromise the truth of the Gospel according to Dr. Warren.<sup>4</sup>

The Willow Creek model was developed and implemented by Bill Hybels.<sup>5</sup> This seeker-targeted church vision is to be a “vibrant church to reach the un-churched.”<sup>6</sup> The church goal was to reach un-churched adults, lead them to Christ, disciple them, and establish the kind of community they had at Son City in the wonder years of ministry.<sup>7</sup> The community Bill Hybels experienced at Son City church was an unwavering faith in God and the fact nothing is impossible for God.<sup>8</sup> The Willow Creek model goal is to reach the un-churched, called “seekers,” with the word of God, which existed at the beginning of their ministry and continues today.<sup>9</sup> People at the Willow Creek seeker model are taught they matter to God and the church.<sup>10</sup> The church has implemented a new members program entitled the “The Five Gs.” The program connects the new members through the following standard of commitment through small groups addressing the following: Grace, Growth, Group, Gifts and Good Stewardship.<sup>11</sup> The Willow Creek Community Church core beliefs are derived from the sixty-six books of the Bible.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 12.

<sup>5</sup> Lynne & Bill Hybels, *Rediscovering Church: The Story and Vision of Willow Creek Community Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 59.

<sup>6</sup> Hybels, *Rediscovering Church*, 60.

<sup>7</sup> Hybels, *Rediscovering Church*, 61.

<sup>8</sup> Hybels, *Rediscovering Church*, 62.

<sup>9</sup> Hybels, *Rediscovering Church*, 63.

<sup>10</sup> Hybels, *Rediscovering Church*, 196.

<sup>11</sup> Hybels, *Rediscovering Church*, 199-200.

<sup>12</sup> Willow Creek Community Church, “What Willow Believes,” accessed January 31, 2016, <https://www.willowcreek.org/aboutwillow/what-willow-believes>.

Mega Churches have exploded in America over the past three decades.<sup>13</sup> Mega churches are thriving in almost every state in the nation.<sup>14</sup> It is believed that mega church leaders and practices are the most influential contemporary dynamic in religion in America.<sup>15</sup> Saint Paul's Baptist Church (SPBC) is a mega cell-based model which was implemented by Rev. Dr. Lance D. Watson. The Saint Paul's Baptist Church (SPBC) is a young, progressive congregation serving in multiple locations.<sup>16</sup> The church doors are opened to people from every background and regardless of where they are on their spiritual journey.<sup>17</sup> SPBC utilizes a network of small groups/cell-based model to reach, unite and disciple members of the church.<sup>18</sup> SPBC is striving to become the kind of church described in the scriptures. SPBC is a church where they are utilizing biblical truths in relevant and practical ways.<sup>19</sup> The cell-based/small group model is for accomplishing disciple-making tasks and spiritual oversight.<sup>20</sup>

Churches are growing and leading people in each of the models described above. The postmodern cultural is inclusive of different cultures, which are also found in the

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<sup>13</sup> Scott Thumma and Dave Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths: What Can We Learn From America's Largest Churches* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 1.

<sup>14</sup> Thumma and Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths*, 1.

<sup>15</sup> Thumma and Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths*, 2.

<sup>16</sup> Lance Watson and Rose Watson, Saint Paul's Baptist Church, "Our Church," accessed January 6, 2016, [http://myspbc.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=Itemid=123](http://myspbc.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=Itemid=123).

<sup>17</sup> Watson and Watson, Saint Paul's Baptist Church, "Our Church."

<sup>18</sup> Watson and Watson, Saint Paul's Baptist Church, "Our Church."

<sup>19</sup> Watson and Watson, Saint Paul's Baptist Church, "Our Church."

<sup>20</sup> Larry Hart, "Models for Ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," *Ministry Today Magazine*, October 31, 2001, accessed January 6, 2016, <http://ministrytodaymag.com/index.php/ministry-today-archives/66-unorganized/1478-models-for-ministry-in-the-21st-century>.

models, mentioned.<sup>21</sup> People enjoy choices. To choose which type of worship service to attend, whether traditional church structure or high tech options through live streaming options, should be readily available and considered in church planning.<sup>22</sup> These models deliver in the varied cultures in attendance, and the high tech arena is an option of worship in addition to the standard brick and mortar structure of church.

### **Psychology of Woman Discipline**

Psychology is defined as the study of behavior and the mind.<sup>23</sup> In addition, psychology is also defined as the study of functions, nature, and the phenomena of behavior and mental experience.<sup>24</sup> Psychology is an independent discipline separate from the disciplines of philosophy and biology from which it emerged.<sup>25</sup> Psychology as a separate discipline is attributed to the German psychologist Wilhelm (Max) Wundt (1832-1920).<sup>26</sup> Wilhelm Wundt is considered psychology's founding father when he opened one of the first psychology labs in the world.<sup>27</sup> His laboratory was dedicated to

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<sup>21</sup> Hart, "Models for Ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century."

<sup>22</sup> Hart, "Models for Ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century."

<sup>23</sup> Gary R. VandenBos, ed., *American Psychological Association: APA Dictionary of Psychology* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2015), 860.

<sup>24</sup> Andrew M. Colman, *Oxford Dictionary of Psychology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006), 617.

<sup>25</sup> Colman, *Oxford Dictionary of Psychology*, 617.

<sup>26</sup> Colman, *Oxford Dictionary of Psychology*, 617.

<sup>27</sup> Lauren Slater, *Opening Skinner's Box: Great Psychological Experiments of the Twentieth Century* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2004), 3-4.

measurement.<sup>28</sup> He wrote the first major textbook of experimental psychology.<sup>29</sup> His book is entitled *Principles of Physiological Psychology* (1873).<sup>30</sup>

Engendering psychology is the project of developing an approach to psychological issues that is sensitive to questions of gender. Feminist psychology, better known as Woman-Centered Psychology, was introduced by U. S. psychologist Florence L. Denmark.<sup>31</sup> Dr. Florence Harriet Levin Denmark is an American psychologist born on January 28, 1931.<sup>32</sup> Florence Denmark is often referred to as a pioneer in the psychology of women. The psychology of women is a respected and recognized field of study because of the leadership of Denmark.<sup>33</sup> Universities and colleges utilized her research in reference to the psychology of women as a guideline for new programs across the country.<sup>34</sup> Denmark is known for her documented cases of the disadvantaged and discrimination status of women in psychology.<sup>35</sup> She was influential and successful in her collaboration with the American Psychological Association to create a thirty-fifth division, the Psychology of Women in 1973.<sup>36</sup> Dr. Florence L. Denmark has received numerous honorary degrees and awards for her contributions to feminism and the impact

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<sup>28</sup> Slater, *Opening Skinner's Box*, 4.

<sup>29</sup> Colman, *Oxford Dictionary of Psychology*, 617.

<sup>30</sup> Colman, *Oxford Dictionary of Psychology*, 617.

<sup>31</sup> VandenBos, *American Psychological Association*, 371

<sup>32</sup> Scott Pious, "Florence Denmark," accessed February 8, 2016, <http://www.denmark.socialpsychology.org/publications>.

<sup>33</sup> Adrian Weiss, "Florence Denmark," in Webster University, accessed February 8, 2016, <http://faculty.webster.edu/woolfm/florencedenmark.html>.

<sup>34</sup> Weiss, "Florence Denmark."

<sup>35</sup> Weiss, "Florence Denmark."

<sup>36</sup> Weiss, "Florence Denmark."

of women in the field of psychology.<sup>37</sup> Feminist thinkers are divided in reference to the noxious role of capitalism in society; however, they are united in their criticism against personal deformations and social inferiority of women.<sup>38</sup>

In 1960, Loris Rabinowitz, a twenty-eight-year-old secretary of an oil-company executive, became a feature story of the day in New York City.<sup>39</sup> She gave an account of her experience while in traffic court paying a fine for her boss.<sup>40</sup> She was dressed in slacks and a blouse when her appearance was addressed by the magistrate, Edward D. Caiazzo. When Mrs. Rabinowitz approached the bench, the magistrate exploded in an outrage stating, “Do you appreciate you’re in a courtroom in slacks?”<sup>41</sup> In addition, he further directed her to go home and change to more appropriate clothes for the courtroom.<sup>42</sup> That was over fifty-six years ago; yet in the twenty-first century women are still dealing with obstacles, challenges and glass ceilings in reference to inequality in different disciplines of study.

Man has felt a need to explain woman from the beginning of time through myths, stereotypes and psychology. Women were explained and observed from a prevalent male perspective, noticeably as “incarnations of both the highest good and the basest evil of

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<sup>37</sup> Adrian Weiss, “Florence Denmark.”

<sup>38</sup> Toni Bernay and Dorothy W. Cantor, eds., *The Psychology of Today’s Woman: New Psychoanalytic Visions* (Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press, 1986), 8.

<sup>39</sup> Gail Collins, *When Everything Changed: The Amazing Journey of American Women from 1960 to the Present* (New York, NY: Little Brown and Company, 2009), 3.

<sup>40</sup> Collins, *When Everything Changed*, 3.

<sup>41</sup> Collins, *When Everything Changed*, 3.

<sup>42</sup> Collins, *When Everything Changed*, 3.

chastity and of lust, of virtue and deceit, and the sacred and the profane.”<sup>43</sup> Man has devised myths to explain the phenomena of the universe; he has also devised a myth to codify and explain the phenomenon woman.<sup>44</sup> When the universe seems chaotic, out of the control of man and does not yield to reason or empirical science in history, the use of myths place the chaos in a category in which man perceives he has a measure of control over his destiny. For an example, if a woman’s powers, which lie in the ability to procreate, and her sexuality frightened and awe him, he can dismiss them with taboos, confine them to special places and or devise elaborate riches to deal with the mystic woman and her powers.<sup>45</sup>

Women were often viewed as a necessary evil. The perception of woman as inferior, evil, an insignificant non-person, hardly tolerated for the services she rendered, is misogyny (hated and or ingrained prejudice towards women).<sup>46</sup> Women perceived as inferior and evil have existed since the eight century and during most of the history of the Western civilization.<sup>47</sup>

A woman’s characteristics, behavior, and the wonderment she excites gave way to the differences between herself and man, raising the issue of a mystery which surrounds her. Her mental capacity, enigmatic face, unpredictable ways and her unique characteristics gave her a feminine essence which baffled scientist, philosophers and the

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<sup>43</sup> Juanita H. Williams, *Psychology of Women: Behavior in a Biosocial Context*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York, NY: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1987), 1.

<sup>44</sup> Williams, *Psychology of Women*, 2.

<sup>45</sup> Williams, *Psychology of Women*, 2.

<sup>46</sup> Williams, *Psychology of Women*, 4.

<sup>47</sup> Williams, *Psychology of Women*, 5.



average male understanding.<sup>48</sup> The mystery which surrounds a woman is in large part contributed to the distance (implemented by mankind), which separates his world from hers and fails to give a woman equal access to communicate her world to mankind.<sup>49</sup> When a woman is described as mysterious, man finds it unnecessary to analyze her behavior and understanding it as a consequence of her position vis-à-vis to him.<sup>50</sup> For man to take the time to analyze a woman's behavior as it relates to him would cause him to acknowledge her oppression and perhaps make a shift in reference to who has the power in their relationship.<sup>51</sup> According to Ilona de Hooge: "Humans would not be successful, indeed would not have survived, without social cohesion."<sup>52</sup> She further states, "Living among others requires all to adhere to agreed upon social and moral norms."<sup>53</sup>

Religion, popular culture and literature constructed and described the mythic model of woman described above historically.<sup>54</sup> The attitudes and beliefs of the past have survived and continue to prevail in the thinking of Western's great philosophers' intellectual traditions.<sup>55</sup> Research reveals many of the popular historical philosophers

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<sup>48</sup> Williams, *Psychology of Women*, 7.

<sup>49</sup> Williams, *Psychology of Women*, 7.

<sup>50</sup> Williams, *Psychology of Women*, 7.

<sup>51</sup> Williams, *Psychology of Women*, 7

<sup>52</sup> Matthew Hutson, "Beyond Happiness: The Upside of Feeling Down," *Psychology Today* 48, no. 1 (January/February 2015): 48.

<sup>53</sup> Hutson, "Beyond Happiness," 48.

<sup>54</sup> Williams, *Psychology of Women*, 12-13.

<sup>55</sup> Williams, *Psychology of Women*, 13.

expressed a strong anti-woman bias that ranged from condescension to severe misogyny.<sup>56</sup>

Philosophy is concerned with probing into principles of reality such as human values and human nature. However, an analysis of many philosophers' theories of human nature reveal the word "human" means man and that women are explicitly excluded.<sup>57</sup> Women are excluded because it is assumed they lack some essential human capacity possessed by males which relegates them along with children to an inferior category.<sup>58</sup>

Aristotle (384-322 BCE), one of if not the greatest of the ancient Greek philosophers, described the relationship among the sexes as the following: women are to men as a slave is to his master.<sup>59</sup> He further stated a woman is an incomplete, and an unfinished man, therefore her condition placed her in the home incapable of independence.<sup>60</sup>

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-88) is an influential social and political philosopher.<sup>61</sup> He is well known for his idea in reference to the agreement people make to live together in the community better known as social contract.<sup>62</sup> Rousseau idea of equality does not extend to gender equality. Rousseau wrote a fictitious book in reference

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<sup>56</sup> Williams, *Psychology of Women*, 13-15.

<sup>57</sup> Williams, *Psychology of Women*, 13.

<sup>58</sup> Williams, *Psychology of Women*, 13.

<sup>59</sup> Williams, *Psychology of Women*, 13.

<sup>60</sup> Williams, *Psychology of Women*, 13.

<sup>61</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau on Sophy's Education, Chapter 5, accessed February 18, 2016, <http://www.newlearningonline.com/new-learning/chapter-5/jean-jacques-rousseau-on-sophys-education>.

<sup>62</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau on Sophy's Education.

to education utilizing an imaginary male character named Emile and his wife Sophy.<sup>63</sup> He describes in this fictitious book how he would educate Emile differently from his wife Sophy. It is his belief a woman should remain in a woman's place because she is incapable of rising to the intellectual level of a man.<sup>64</sup> He further states she should not raise her daughter to be a "good man" and be in defiance of nature.<sup>65</sup> He believed a woman should learn many things, yet these things should be "suitable to a woman."<sup>66</sup> In addition, he states men should not be afraid to educate women. Yet, women should be educated to manage the home and "look after the family." Simply stated, a woman should be taught to be docile which is a "woman's business."<sup>67</sup>

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) is a nineteenth-century German philosopher, poet, cultural critic, essayist, and Latin and Greek scholar.<sup>68</sup> His writings, which have exerted an enormous influence on Western philosophy and intellectual history, were inclusive of the following: cultural theory, history, consciousness as the meaning of existence, truth, morality aesthetics, language, power and nihilism (everything is baseless).<sup>69</sup> He is also an example of a traditional misogyny.<sup>70</sup> Nietzsche believed

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<sup>63</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau on Sophy's Education.

<sup>64</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau on Sophy's Education.

<sup>65</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau on Sophy's Education.

<sup>66</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau on Sophy's Education.

<sup>67</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau on Sophy's Education.

<sup>68</sup> Dale Wilkerson, "Friedrich Nietzsche," in *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, accessed February 19, 2016, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/nietzsche/>.

<sup>69</sup> Dale Wilkerson, "Friedrich Nietzsche."

<sup>70</sup> Dale Wilkerson, "Friedrich Nietzsche."

equality is impossible between men and women and dangerous.<sup>71</sup> He continues in stating man should be trained for war and a woman should be trained for the warrior.<sup>72</sup>

Aristotle, Rousseau and Nietzsche are typical in their thoughts in reference to the derogation of women during the era of their time in history. Their assumptions were rarely questioned in reference to the inequality of women compared to men.

### **Women Scientists and Engineers**

The numbers and proportion of women obtaining engineering and science degrees have increased dramatically over the last thirty years.<sup>73</sup> Notwithstanding many years of progression, increased enrollment and degrees earned by women in the field of Science and Engineering, women continue to remain a small percentage of those in leadership in any sector of the U.S. workforce.<sup>74</sup> Anti-discriminations laws were implemented during the mid-1960s through the 1990s which catapulted the career paths for both women and minorities.<sup>75</sup> The Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII, banned discrimination based on sex, race, national origin and religion by all organizations that employ fifteen or more people regardless of the type of funding. In addition, Title IX banned sex discrimination in

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<sup>71</sup> Williams, *Psychology of Women*, 14.

<sup>72</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra: A Book For All And None*, trans. Thomas Common (New York, NY: The MacMillan Company, 1916), 75.

<sup>73</sup> The Committee on Maximizing the Potential of Women in Academic Science and Engineering, *Beyond Bias and Barriers: Fulfilling and Potential of Women in Academic Science and Engineering* (Washington, D C: The National Academies Press, 2007), 13.

<sup>74</sup> Suzanne Gage Brainard, "Women Scientist as Leaders," in *Women, Science, and Myth: Gender Beliefs from Antiquity to the Present*, ed. Sue V. Rosser (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, Inc. 2008), 283.

<sup>75</sup> Brainard, "Women Scientist as Leaders," 283.

education for institutions of higher education receiving federal funds.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, Executive Order 11246 bans discriminations and requires universities and federal contractors to maintain affirmative action plans to increase the representation of women and minorities in their perspective workforces.<sup>77</sup> The laws mentioned and additional laws implemented in early 2000 have substantially helped to level the workforce playing field, yet the country still has a distance to go to maintain the integrity of the laws in all disciplines.<sup>78</sup> The situation is especially severe for minority-group women in engineering and sciences who are subject to dual discrimination and are required to overcome more barriers to achieve success.<sup>79</sup> Minority-group women doctorates are less likely to be tenure positions than men of any racial group or white women.<sup>80</sup> Women, especially minorities, continued to be under represented not only in tenure positions but in leadership positions as well.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, women are awarded less grant money, have lower salaries and perceived the workplace as hostile and unwelcoming.<sup>82</sup> In reference to grant monies received, women during the 2001-2003 received only sixty-three percent of

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<sup>76</sup> Brainard, "Women Scientist as Leaders," 283.

<sup>77</sup> Brainard, "Women Scientist as Leaders," 283.

<sup>78</sup> Brainard, "Women Scientist as Leaders," 283.

<sup>79</sup> The Committee on Maximizing the Potential of Women in Academic Science and Engineering, *Beyond Bias and Barriers: Fulfilling and Potential of Women in Academic Science and Engineering* (Washington, D C: The National Academies Press, 2007), 15.

<sup>80</sup> The Committee on Maximizing the Potential of Women in Academic Science and Engineering, *Beyond Bias and Barriers: Fulfilling and Potential of Women in Academic Science and Engineering* (Washington, D C: The National Academies Press, 2007), 15.

<sup>81</sup> Jo Handelsman et al, *More Women in Science* 309, no. 5738 (August 2005): 1190-1191.

<sup>82</sup> Cathy A. Trower and Richard P. Chait, "Faculty Diversity: Too Little for Too Long," *Harvard Magazine*, March-April 2002, accessed on February 23, 2016, <http://harvardmagazine.com/2002/03/faculty-diversity.html>.

the funding male applicants received.<sup>83</sup> The inequalities are progressive; simply stated, the disparity widens from assistant to full time professor.<sup>84</sup> Women earned in the 2000-2001 academics \$10,301 less than men at public institutions and \$12,895 less at private institutions.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, during that period, wage disparities widened approximately three percent from the year prior.<sup>86</sup> Moreover, women face challenges in the discipline of science and engineering that most men do not face such as the following: balance of family and career, quality of office and laboratory space, lack of mentoring and collaboration, unequal research support, employment and child care options.<sup>87</sup>

Despite the obstacles and inequalities faced by women in the discipline of science and engineering, the following among others have successfully navigated their careers to leadership positions in academic institutions: Dr. Donna E. Shalala, Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson, and Mae Jemison.

Dr. Donna E. Shalala (1941-) became the president and a professor of political science at the University of Miami in June 2002 and retired in 2015.<sup>88</sup> She stated in her resignation letter to the University community, “Pursuing greatness is not for the meek or

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<sup>83</sup> Susan D. Hosek et al, “Gender Differences in Major Federal External Grant Programs,” sponsored by National Science Foundation (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2005), 41, accessed February 23, 2016, <https://www.nwhm.org/online-exhibits/rightsforwomen/index.html>.

<sup>84</sup> Trower and Chait, “Faculty Diversity: Too Little for Too Long.”

<sup>85</sup> Trower and Chait, “Faculty Diversity: Too Little for Too Long.”

<sup>86</sup> Trower and Chait, “Faculty Diversity: Too Little for Too Long.”

<sup>87</sup> Brainard, “Women Scientist as Leaders,” 285.

<sup>88</sup> Katie Hennessy, *Jones & Bartlett Learning Health Blog*, September 9, 2014, accessed February 24, 2016, <http://blogs.jblearning.com/health/2014/09/09/university-of-miami-president-dr-donna-shalala-to-retire-in-2015/>.

cautious.”<sup>89</sup> This statement speaks volumes to her determination and will to move forward in life in the midst of the challenges in life. Dr. Shalala is an accomplished scholar, administrator and teacher.<sup>90</sup> She was appointed to serve as secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) with President Clinton’s administration and is the only secretary of HHS to serve for eight years.<sup>91</sup> In addition, she was appointed by President Carter’s administration to serve as assistant secretary for Policy Development and Research at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.<sup>92</sup> In 2008, President Bush presented her with the highest civilian award, the Presidential Medal of Freedom.<sup>93</sup> She also received the Nelson Mandela award for Health and Human Rights in 2010 recognizing her work for improving the health of the disadvantage populations in South Africa.<sup>94</sup> Dr. Shalala currently serves as the president and CEO of the Clinton Foundation.<sup>95</sup>

Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson (1946 -) is a theoretical physicist and is the first African American woman elected to the Nation Academy of Engineering and the first to lead a

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<sup>89</sup> Donna E. Shalala, *Dialogue: A Letter from President Donna E. Shalala*, September 8, 2014 accessed September 24, 2016, [http://www.miami.edu/communications/dialogue/2013-2014/dialogue-\\_9\\_08\\_14.html](http://www.miami.edu/communications/dialogue/2013-2014/dialogue-_9_08_14.html).

<sup>90</sup> Brainard, “Women Scientist as Leaders,” 288.

<sup>91</sup> Brainard, “Women Scientist as Leaders,” 288-289.

<sup>92</sup> Brainard, “Women Scientist as Leaders,” 288.

<sup>93</sup> Presidential Leadership Scholars, accessed September 25, 2016, <http://www.presidential.leaderscholars.org/bio/donna-e-shalala>.

<sup>94</sup> Presidential Leadership Scholars.

<sup>95</sup> Presidential Leadership Scholars.

national research university.<sup>96</sup> As a theoretical physicist, she specializes in theoretical condensed matter physics and is highly known for her work in polaronic aspects of electrons in two-dimensional systems.<sup>97</sup> Dr. Jackson became the eighteenth president of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in July 1999, the oldest technological research university in the United States.<sup>98</sup> She is one of two of the first African American women to receive a doctorate in physics in the United States.<sup>99</sup> In addition, Dr. Jackson is the first African American woman to receive a doctorate in any subject from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1973.<sup>100</sup> In 2014, President Barack Obama appointed Dr. Jackson as Co-Chair of the President's Intelligence Advisory Board. The Board assesses issues pertaining to the quality, quantity and adequacy of intelligence activities. In addition, the board assesses the effectiveness of organizational structure management and personnel. Moreover, she co-chairs the performance of all federal government agencies engaged in the collection, evaluation and execution of intelligence policy. Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson is a distinguish scientist and an advocate for science, public policy and education.<sup>101</sup>

Dr. Mae Jemison (1956-) is the first African American woman astronaut to enter space with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in September of

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<sup>96</sup> Shirley Ann Jackson- Rensselaer, *Polytechnic Institute*, accessed February 26, 2016, <http://www.rpi.edu/president/profile.html>.

<sup>97</sup> Brainard, "Women Scientist as Leaders," 287.

<sup>98</sup> Jackson- Rensselaer, *Polytechnic Institute*.

<sup>99</sup> Jackson- Rensselaer, *Polytechnic Institute*.

<sup>100</sup> Jackson- Rensselaer, *Polytechnic Institute*.

<sup>101</sup> Brainard, "Women Scientist as Leaders," 287.



1992 aboard the shuttle *Endeavour*.<sup>102</sup> Mae Jemison enrolled in higher education at Stanford University at the age of sixteen.<sup>103</sup> She graduated in 1977 with degrees in chemical engineering and Afro-American studies. In 1981, she received a Doctor of Medicine degree from Cornell University.<sup>104</sup> She has practiced medicine with the Peace Corps in Cambodian refugee camps in West Africa.<sup>105</sup> Dr. Jemison speaks fluent English, Swahili, Russian and Japanese.<sup>106</sup> Dr. Jemison founded the Jemison Group, Inc. after she resigned from NASA in 1993.<sup>107</sup> She is currently working on several projects; one in particular is in reference to advancing technology in developing countries and improving healthcare in Africa.<sup>108</sup>

### **Women in Education**

During the post American Revolutionary era and during the intellectual atmosphere of the Enlightenment period, women were beginning to experience a form of equality and became educated.<sup>109</sup> They were not educated in leadership in institutions or political affairs obviously. Instead, they were educated to perfect their domestic duties in

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<sup>102</sup> The Star Child Team, "Dr. Mae Jemison - StarChild - Nasa," accessed February 26, 2016, [http://starchild.gsfc.nasa.gov/docs/StarChild/whos\\_who\\_level2/jemison.html](http://starchild.gsfc.nasa.gov/docs/StarChild/whos_who_level2/jemison.html).

<sup>103</sup> The Star Child Team, "Dr. Mae Jemison - StarChild - Nasa."

<sup>104</sup> The Star Child Team, "Dr. Mae Jemison - StarChild - Nasa."

<sup>105</sup> The Star Child Team, "Dr. Mae Jemison - StarChild - Nasa."

<sup>106</sup> The Star Child Team, "Dr. Mae Jemison - StarChild - Nasa."

<sup>107</sup> The Star Child Team, "Dr. Mae Jemison - StarChild - Nasa."

<sup>108</sup> The Star Child Team, "Dr. Mae Jemison - StarChild - Nasa."

<sup>109</sup> Susan Hill Lindley, *You Have Stept Out of Your Place: A History of Women and Religion in America* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 50.

their homes and to raised their children, especially the girls, to stay in their domesticated place.<sup>110</sup> The boys were raised to embrace the public spear in contrast to the girls being raised in the domestic spear.<sup>111</sup> Developments in women's education occurred in hundreds of small local mission societies.<sup>112</sup> As women started to subscribe to missionary journals, read letters from the field, listen to speakers, and form study groups, their horizon was expanded.<sup>113</sup> Women decided to form separate missionary boards and manage the funds raised because, as they were educated on current events, they desired to do more outside of the home.<sup>114</sup> Therefore, the foreign missionary movement was started.<sup>115</sup> The women realized they could act effectively and independently for a cause, thereby, utilizing their skills for a cause to raise money, evangelize and teach throughout the world.<sup>116</sup>

In the early 1800s, a large number of private schools were opened with separate subjects of study for males and females.<sup>117</sup> The schools prepared boys for religion and law and emphasized Greek and Latin languages.<sup>118</sup> The girls were trained to learn

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<sup>110</sup> Lindley, *You Have Stept Out of Your Place*, 50.

<sup>111</sup> Margret A. Nash, *Women's Education in the United States 1780-1840* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 1.

<sup>112</sup> Lindley, *You Have Stept Out of Your Place*, 77.

<sup>113</sup> Lindley, *You Have Stept Out of Your Place*, 77.

<sup>114</sup> Lindley, *You Have Stept Out of Your Place*, 77.

<sup>115</sup> Lindley, *You Have Stept Out of Your Place*, 77.

<sup>116</sup> Lindley, *You Have Stept Out of Your Place*, 77-78.

<sup>117</sup> Brainard, "Women Scientist as Leaders," 213.

<sup>118</sup> Brainard, "Women Scientist as Leaders," 213.

etiquette and needle point preparing them for a proper lady like future.<sup>119</sup> Again these were private schools for elite families.

Emma Hart Willard (1787-1870) retired from teaching and opened a girls' school in her home to assist with her family's finances.<sup>120</sup> She later wrote *A Plan for Improving Female Education*, a respected and influential proposal to win public support for girls' schools.<sup>121</sup> Emma Willard was an advocate for equal education for young women.<sup>122</sup> In 1821, she opened the Troy Female Seminary in New York.<sup>123</sup> Many women who were wives and mothers graduated from Troy and became social activists, teachers, and writers.<sup>124</sup> African American women were limited in their access to education due to continued racial bias.<sup>125</sup>

Prudence Crandall (1803-1890) was designated in 1995 as the state of Connecticut's Heroine.<sup>126</sup> She was recognized for her unwavering and courageous commitment to abolitionism and education reform for the school she started for "Young Ladies of Color."<sup>127</sup> In 1833, Crandall recruited pupils among middle class African-

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<sup>119</sup> Rosser, *Women, Science, and Myth*, 213-214.

<sup>120</sup> Emma Willard School, "Emma Hart Willard," accessed February 27, 2016, <http://www.emma-willard.org>.

<sup>121</sup> Emma Willard School, "Emma Hart Willard."

<sup>122</sup> Emma Willard School, "Emma Hart Willard."

<sup>123</sup> Emma Willard School, "Emma Hart Willard."

<sup>124</sup> Emma Willard School, "Emma Hart Willard."

<sup>125</sup> Prudence Crandall Center Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame, "Prudence Crandall," accessed February 27, 2016, [http://www.cwhf.org/inductees/education-preservation/prudence-crandall#.VtHTP\\_A8KrU](http://www.cwhf.org/inductees/education-preservation/prudence-crandall#.VtHTP_A8KrU).

<sup>126</sup> Prudence Crandall Center Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame. "Prudence Crandall."

<sup>127</sup> Prudence Crandall Center Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame, "Prudence Crandall."

American families throughout the Northeast. She started the first boarding and teacher-training school for young black women. Crandall's commitment to the education of young black women was met with opposition from the Connecticut's residents and the "Black Law." The "Black Law" was passed after Crandall continue to teach during the opposition which specifically prohibited the teaching of "any colored people . . . not habitants" of Connecticut. Crandall faced trial due to her persistence in teaching young black women. She was convicted at her second trial. The conviction was later overturned and dismissed by the Supreme Court. Consequently, many years later, her Supreme Court case arguments were used in the Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court landmark school desegregation decision of 1954. Prudence Crandall stated the following in 1833,

I said in my heart convictions. What shall I do? Shall I be inactive and permit prejudice, the mother of abominations, to remain undisturbed? Or shall I venture to enlist in the ranks of those who with the Sword of Truth dare hold combat with prevailing iniquity? I contemplated for a while the manner in which I might best serve the people of color. As wealth was not mine, I saw no other means of benefiting them, than by imparting to those of my own sex that were anxious to learn, all the instruction I might be able to give, however small the amount."<sup>128</sup>

I ponder Prudence Crandall's statement with tear-filled eyes, an immeasurable joy deep in my soul and great anticipation for my future as I complete my doctorate work.

Mary McLeod Bethune (1875-1955) was an extraordinary civil rights leader, a government official and educator.<sup>129</sup> Bethune is a daughter of former slaves who founded the Daytona Educational and Industrial Training School for Negro Girls in Daytona Beach, Florida, in 1904.<sup>130</sup> The school grew to include a farm, high school and nursing

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<sup>128</sup> Prudence Crandall Center Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame, "Prudence Crandall."

<sup>129</sup> National Council of Negro Women, "Mary McLeod Bethune," accessed February 27, 2016, <https://www.ncnw.org/about/bethune.htm>.

<sup>130</sup> National Council of Negro Women, "Mary McLeod Bethune."

school. In 1929, the school merged with Cookman Institute becoming Bethune-Cookman College and was fully accredited in 1943.<sup>131</sup> In addition, Bethune founded the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW).<sup>132</sup> The NCNW gave Black women the opportunity to realize their goals for social justice and human rights through constructive and united actions.<sup>133</sup> Moreover, she was the first African American woman to be involved in assisting four different presidents in the White House and to have a monument on the public park land in Washington DC, the Bethune Memorial Statue.<sup>134</sup> The legacy of Mary McLeod Bethune continues. Since 1943, the Bethune-Cookman College has graduated more than 12,900 students and offers Bachelor's degrees in twenty-six major disciplines.<sup>135</sup>

Mary McLeod Bethune's pledge for the NCNW states:

It is our pledge to make a lasting contribution to all that is finest and best in America, to cherish and enrich her heritage of freedom and progress by working for the integration of all her people regardless of race, creed, or national origin, into her spiritual, social, cultural, civic, and economic life, and thus aid her to achieve the glorious destiny of a true and unfettered democracy.<sup>136</sup>

Mary McLeod makes me proud to be called "Woman." As this unit is being written during Black History Month, I am sure that her name has been mentioned countless times for her work and contributions.

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<sup>131</sup> National Council of Negro Women, "Mary McLeod Bethune."

<sup>132</sup> National Council of Negro Women, "Mary McLeod Bethune."

<sup>133</sup> National Council of Negro Women, "Mary McLeod Bethune."

<sup>134</sup> National Council of Negro Women, "Mary McLeod Bethune."

<sup>135</sup> National Council of Negro Women, "Mary McLeod Bethune."

<sup>136</sup> National Council of Negro Women, "Mary McLeod Bethune."

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this document shares the rich history of America and women throughout the centuries to the present from a theoretical perspective. The challenges and victories are discussed as well as current and past indecisiveness of American leaders throughout history. America's history was built on the backs of slaves, women, men and other nationals across cultures. This human race of people gave their energy, strength and some paid the ultimate price of their lives to move the country forward. Yet, we still must contend with racism across cultures, inequalities across religion and gender and a disparity in our socioeconomic status. I still believe in the purpose and the intentions of some of America's founding fathers and believe we will continue to progress in equality for all regardless of religion, gender and race, with God's abundant grace and mercy.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **PROJECT ANALYSIS**

#### **Introduction**

Chapter six is an integration of this author's foundational papers, methodology, project implementation, summary of learning and is inclusive of my project analysis. It also exemplifies how these narratives impact my hypothesis proposed for my context of ministry. It will address the reasoning behind choosing the described methodology approach utilized to gather data and the actual implementation of the proposed project. It further intersects and leads to the praxis and implementation of the project: "The Women's Empowerment Initiative: Connecting Women in Ministry Through Mentoring, Networking, and Spiritual Formation at Saint Paul's Baptist Church." In addition, this chapter will be inclusive of whether the hypothesis was supported or negated.

Historically, issues facing women in religions across the gamete of faiths have not changed since the beginning of time. The issues women face in their perspective beliefs seem overwhelmingly the same whether a woman is practicing her faith in Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism or another religion. It appears routinely and indiscriminately that women are being utilized in the faith communities to perform many of the domestic responsibilities from home today in the church. However, it is apparent and important to note that research reveals women are beginning to be noticed for their unique differences in gender, assets, gifts and abilities to advance the purpose of the

kingdom of God in the church. Women are utilizing their education and gifted abilities to crack the glass ceiling of a patriarchal religious system dominated by men. Ironically, it is the men who are beginning to notice the imperative need for women in leadership positions in the religious communities across many religions.

It was imperative for this author to share the different theological perspectives of major theologians throughout history. This research paper embodies the history and foundation of Christian/Classical Theology. The Christian/Classical Theology's origin and significance to the western world is discussed and supports the foundation of the writings as it relates to the significance of women in ministry. Systematic Theology is discussed as it simplifies and supports the origin of the Trinity and the purpose of each person of the Trinity as it applies to the Christian faith, inclusive of men and women of faith. The transition of philosophical thought continues with the theological views of theologians and emphasizes Jesus as a liberator of women. The Feminist Liberator, Womanist, Womanism, and Womanish theologies are discussed to emphasize the need of inclusiveness and uniqueness of women in a male dominant world of religious beliefs and practices. Moreover, Practical Theology is discussed and the praxis of the theory is demonstrated in the form of prayer and the embodiment of God in the calling of female and male to a personal relationship and purpose in the kingdom. The research of theology reveals an imminent need for the empowerment and inclusiveness of women in leadership positions and a liberating environment in the church. Being that Jesus was a liberator of women, who are we to oppress one another.

A theoretical perspective reveals the rich history of America and women throughout the centuries to the present. America's histories of women were carefully



discussed in my research from a theoretical perspective in the varied disciplines of psychology, science, engineering and education. In addition to the struggles of women, their joys were revealed in the research as well. Women are prevailing in leadership roles in corporate America throughout the country due to the work of activists, improved laws, federal regulations and the hard work of courageous men and women. The theoretical perspective reveals the progress of women in society. In addition, it leaves room for discussion in reference to the distance a woman still has to travel in the midst of her success to maintain her rightfully earned status. The distance women must continue to travel is inclusive of inequality in salaries, employment opportunities, mentors, laboratory space, funding of major projects, organizational connections, empowerment opportunities, education and leadership roles in varied disciplines inclusive of religion. This informative and exhausted research of the history of women in ministry gives a vivid and detail examination of the historical background of the devaluation of the role of women in ministry and society. The research of theology reveals an imminent need for the empowerment and inclusiveness of women in leadership positions and a liberating environment in the church.

Women in ministry in the twenty first-century are serving in thousands of churches across the country. Our resources, monetary support, education, skills, and abilities are utilized as we answer the calling of God to serve in ministry/churches. Therefore, it is imperative to turn the tide and support, nurture, empower and acknowledge women in leadership roles in the church. The research reveals and demonstrates the tenacity and abilities of women who were forerunners and game changers in tumultuous and difficult times answering the call of God to serve in ministry.

Without a prophetic voice and praxis within our theology, our service to God is merely pious activity and a loud clanging of a gong in the church.

The Women's Empowerment Initiative: Connecting Women in Ministry Through Mentoring, Networking, and Spiritual Formation at Saint Paul's Baptist Church project is prayerfully designed to give a prophetic voice to the women inclusive of a practical praxis as a foundation for the project.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *Hypothesis*

The hypothesis of this research project is based on the current reality that women serving in ministry are not routinely nurtured, mentored and empowered in areas uniquely to their gender in the church. On any given Sunday morning church service, women by far outnumber the men. Statistically speaking, according to a recent report, "U. S. Congregations," the United States congregation has an adult crowd that is typically sixty-one percent female and thirty-nine percent male.<sup>1</sup> This gender gap is inclusive of all age categories.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, American churches on Sunday mornings reflect 13 million more adult women than men.<sup>3</sup>

The hypothesis of this research project is undergirded by the premise of a series of symposiums on the unique needs of women serving in ministry. These informative

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<sup>1</sup> "What-are-the-major-challenges-that-u-s-congregations-face," U. S. Congregations, accessed June 18, 2016, <http://www.uscongregations.org/blog/2014/02/17/>.

<sup>2</sup> "What-are-the-major-challenges-that-u-s-congregations-face," U. S. Congregations.

<sup>3</sup> "What-are-the-major-challenges-that-u-s-congregations-face," U. S. Congregations."

sessions will inform, acknowledge and assist in moving the women forward from a place of stagnation and complacency to a place of liberation and progression. The symposiums will give women the information needed to start their journey of ministry with a new joy and eternal purpose as they serve God through service to his people. Moreover, it is proposed the results of this model will yield a host of engaged, focused, informed, confident, healthy, productive and balanced women excited to serve God with their gifts.

I am blessed and fortunate to have been supported and encouraged by men both in my work in chaplaincy in state government and the church. However, I am most lifted and encouraged in a different way when I attend seminars and retreats designed for women by women. Seminars, symposiums and workshops created for women by women address issues and challenges which are unique to women serving in ministry. There is an unexpected sisterhood bond which forms spontaneously when women come together with similar experiences, pains and joys. It is a transforming experience to worship God and sit with women who serve God in excellence. Women leaders in these settings are transparent and demonstrate an unusual candor and honesty when they graciously share their most personal experiences whether it is a joy or deep pain. Women symposiums and workshops are essential to the growth, empowerment and leadership of women. When women gather in ministry and share a common goal to serve God effectively, there is a healing that takes place and burdens become light. Our material things and creature comforts become less important in this setting. Sisters worship, cry and support each other in a manner in which we rarely experience in the church. Hence, though this hypothesis is based in a Baptist church that has been open to women, yet women should

be conscious of the roles that they can play in empowering their fellow sisters, both lay and clergy, while challenging patriarchal leadership in churches.

Women are significant in the church and to God as revealed in his word. After all, the bible reveals it was the women who were at the empty tomb of the resurrected Christ. Luke 24:1 reads, “. . . very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.”<sup>4</sup> These women in ministry were working at home preparing the spices and showed up early in the morning to serve the Son of God even at his grave. This particular passage of the bible shows women in ministry working at home and in service for the progression of the gospel of Jesus the Christ. Moreover, the church continues to benefit from the employment of women, their leadership, their unique gifts, organizational skills, talents, stewardship, seminary training, education and volunteer efforts. Yet, often the women are not nurtured, mentored, empowered, groomed, taken under a brother’s wing for training, or shown appreciation in the church.

Church ministry suffers and is ineffective when women serving in ministry are not nurtured, mentored and empowered in areas uniquely to them. Consequently, the women serving in ministry often become irate, disengaged, disfranchised, and divided while serving in ministry due to the church’s failure to recognize their strength and needs that are unique to women. Unfortunately, in an environment such as this, a woman’s in ministry gifts can remain dormant, and women often suffer the consequences in silence.

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<sup>4</sup> Luke 24:1, NIV.

*Intervention*

The County of Henrico has approximately one-quarter of a million residents living in a planned community of 245 square miles. The county of Henrico consists of a large expanse of fertile land, office retail and diversified industrial areas. The county of Henrico is divided into the following five magisterial districts: Brookland, Fairfield, Three Chopt, Tuckahoe and Varina.

The context of this proposed project, Saint Paul's Baptist Church (SPBC), is located in East Henrico and is not unique in its history of men being out numbered in the church as compared to women in attendance. Reflecting upon the various ministries at SPBC with over 11,000 members, a women's ministry does not exist. Yet, the women, especially those in leadership, are present and serving in great numbers throughout the church. Research of the history of this church revealed there were nine women and four men at the very first meeting to structure and implement the SPBC.

Saint Paul's Baptist Church is where I have been trained, fed spiritually and taught ministry for twenty-nine years. In my research of Saint Paul's Baptist Church and my reflection of my twenty-nine years of service, there is a one population of servants that are not united and nurtured: the women. There is a great deficit in the empowerment of women for ministry. Simply stated, women need to be empowered in ministry at Saint Paul's Baptist Church. Women outnumber the men in the county of Henrico and at Saint Paul's Baptist Church. The women, especially those in leadership positions, are broken, exhausted, divided, and disconnected compared to other ministries. After my research of Henrico County, statistics revealed women outnumber the population of men, and the same is true in this church and county. Women are amongst the hardest working people in

the church, yet they are disenfranchised. In my observation and opinion, the women are significant in the church and to God as revealed in his word. The church often benefits from the employment of women, our finances, servanthood, and our seminary trained/college education. Please note Saint Paul's Baptist Church allows and welcomes women to serve in any capacity they are qualified to serve in. Yet, the women are not nurtured, mentored, empowered, groomed or shown appreciation in the church. Having served in various capacities in the church, pre and post minister, I believe God has called me for a time such as this to empower women in the church. The strengths of the church are in the population of dedicated men and women working towards a common goal of service to God through serving his people. I have had the opportunity to work in the field of corrections for over twenty-one years working with incarcerated people. The women at SPBC, according to my observations, are incarcerated spiritually and physically. God has prophetically declared to the church to set the captives free according to his word. Once licensed and ordained, the women in our church often leave to plant churches and/or ministries to give others what they did not receive.

It is necessary and imperative for SPBC and churches throughout the world to start to nurture and minister to the women as a unique and viable asset to the ministry of God. The Women's Empowerment Initiative: Connecting Women in Ministry through Mentoring, Networking and Spiritual Formation at Saint Paul's Baptist Church is implemented as a part of the intervention to address this subject matter. The symposiums were implemented from March through June of 2016. Saint Paul's Baptist Church is an enormous organization in multiple locations. Therefore, it was a necessity to start planning and coordinating with the staff prior to the event to secure space, confirm dates

on the church's calendar and announcements in the bulletin. In addition, meetings with the leadership of the church and aligning my schedule with their meetings became a pressing and necessary task. The pastor reviewed and approved my notice to place an announcement in the church bulletin.

An informational session was held at Saint Paul's Baptist Church leadership conference at the Creighton (main) location and led by me. This session was held to inform and recruit participants (See Appendix A).

The first symposium, "The Essentials of a Prayer Life," was held at the SPBC Belt location and led by me (See Appendix B). During the symposium, we discussed the purpose and reasoning for being prayerful women serving God. We further discussed why prayer is essential, humbling and requires us to yield our concerns before God. We examined scriptures from the Bible inclusive of Ephesians 6:10-18; 1Thessalonians 5:17; Luke 4:42; 11:13; Matthew 6:5-13; Job 1:6-12; Revelations 12:10; Ezekiel 8:9-18 and Deuteronomy 29:29. In addition, we discussed how to pray, selecting a place to pray and time of day. Moreover, we concluded with the need for a variety of religious material to read and to align ourselves with prayerful mentors and friends.

The second symposium was held at the Westerre Conference Center. The topic was the "One System of Care Retreat" (See Appendix C). I led this session. The conference shared the need for self-care and care of the congregants. Furthermore, we discussed each symposium in detailed and reiterated the purpose of the project, the significance of each woman serving in ministry and the project dates and time frames. The women seem genuinely interested and actively participated in further discussion with me during lunch and throughout the day.

The third symposium was held at SPBC Belt location. The topic was “Domestic Violence” (See Appendix D). I led this session and was assisted by Rev. J. She gave a personal account of domestic violence in her life. She utilized a variety of visual prompts, handouts and musical illustrations throughout her presentation. The women were engaged and asked a variety of questions. This appeared to be an intense and necessary session. We unintentionally went beyond our designated time to accommodate the women.

The fourth symposium was held at SPBC Belt location. The topic was “Life Insurance, Wills, Trust, Medical Directives, and Finances” (See Appendix E). State Farm Agent Percy Barnett and myself led this session. This session also seemed to captivate the attention of the participants. There was a lot of discussion around life insurance, wills and finances. I believe the insurance agent enjoyed the session as much as the women. The women were given a variety of resources to read and utilize at a more convenient time for them.

### *Research Design*

The methodology used in this project is mixed methodology design. It is an approach to inquiry involving collecting both qualitative and quantitative data while integrating the two forms of data. In addition, the mixed methods research design utilizes the distinct designs that may involve theoretical frameworks and philosophical assumptions. The combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a more complete understanding of a research problem (than either approach alone) and is the



core assumption form of inquiry according to John W. Creswell.<sup>5</sup> In this method the qualitative and quantitative data are collected and analyze separately, then comparing the results to see if the findings confirm or dis-confirm each other.<sup>6</sup> The mixed methods research design utilizes pre- and post-surveys in this project model. The pre- and post-surveys include open and closed ended questions, observation and documented data. The mixed methods approach is chosen because it minimizes the limitation of both methods and draws on the strength of the qualitative and quantitative design methods.

### *Measurement*

The purpose of this project is to engage the women serving in ministry at Saint Paul's Baptist Church in a series of symposium sessions. The process involved equipping the women and empowering them in an open discussion of issues pertinent to women serving in ministry. Participation of the women from the church environment and their willingness to be transparent were imperative for the program to succeed.

### *Instrumentation*

The instrumentation for this project was pre and post-test surveys designed specifically for this project. The surveys are used to get feedback from a specific group (women in ministry) and to gain information in reference to their needs and wants. It was necessary to contact the church and engaged the staff at different levels in the church to assure a project of this nature could be implemented (See Appendix F and G).

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<sup>5</sup> John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approach* 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2014), 217.

<sup>6</sup> Creswell, *Research Design*, 219.

### *Stake Holders*

Many people were involved in this project from the beginning to the end. Among them were professional and context associates. The professional associates who provided invaluable assistance are inclusive of the following: Rev. Dr. Lavern Wilson McLaughlin, Rev. Dr. Mary H. Young and Rev. Dr. Lance D. Watson. Rev. Dr. Lavern Wilson is the senior pastor of Charis Worship Center. She provided consultation, ideas, prayers and even laughter during my tireless evenings of writing. She listened to my thoughts and plans for this project and gently guided me through the process. More importantly, she prayed for me and with me when I sat in my car and cried. She called me and checked on me numerous times when I was heavy in her heart. At one point, she suggested a time of prayer and fasting together which really motivated me to continue the journey.

Dr. Mary H. Young is the director of the Master of Arts in the Christian Education program and assistant professor of Christian Education at the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University. She provided a place for me to literally sit at her kitchen table to eat and review my writings and share my thoughts. We have spent time in restaurants eating and talking as I took notes on my smart phone in reference to my doctoral writings. Dr. Young has responded to me when she was out of town every time I called or sent a text. In addition, she has listened to the reading of my document and helped me brainstorm ideas for my project late at night after a long day at work. Moreover, she is familiar with my context and has been requested to share her expertise in ministry at SPBC. Rev. Dr. Lance D. Watson serves at the senior pastor of Saint Paul's Baptist Church and is my prolific pastor of the word of God. Pastor Watson

opened the doors of SPBC for me to utilize the resources of the building and provided me with access to the staff, meetings and conferences. He advised me by email and face-to-face contact in reference to the project. The context associates provided assistance in planning, consultation and the design of the project model. The context associates are Rev. Betty Jackson, Minister Arlette Dandridge, Minister Denise Coleman, Demika Cosby, Rev. Maceo Freeman and Rev. Jamie Duncan, in addition to the staff at SPBC.

## **Implementation**

### *Collection of Data*

A church of more than 11, 000 members requires meetings and conversations with those who handle the church calendar, the staff which lock and unlock the church doors and most importantly conversations with the pastor. These conversations and more are a few of the intricate details of implementation for this project model. The project preparation phase started with contacting my professional associates while simultaneously contacting my context associates to share the details of my proposed project and the context deficits. Due to the different schedules and varied localities of my professional and context associates, it was imperative to align my schedule with their schedules. Maintaining contact with my associates required many phone calls, face to face contacts, sitting at the picnic table outside the library and even visits to the kitchen tables in their homes.

One of my professional associates is my pastor, which was a necessity in order to have his knowledge of the church, access to the venue (church) and to the key staff

members to help assist with this research project. Following numerous emails and meetings, my pastor sent an email to his associate ministers at all the church localities to advise them of my need to access the venue and engage the members in reference to the project. In addition, a notice was placed in the church's bulletin to inform the women of the project and to recruit participants. It took several rewrites of my calendar timeline, flexibility and a willingness to contend with last minute changes by the church to align my calendar with the church's calendar. A church the size and magnitude of SPBC has numerous activities planned and implemented continually throughout the year. At one point, I received a call in the middle of my event stating the church was closed for the weekend. However, an exception was made because the participants were already in the church and the event was in progress.

It was important to me to contact the help and advice of those in the field of their expertise to engage and inform the women in the symposiums. With the assistance of my contextual and professional associates, I contacted professionals in the following fields: attorneys (which specialized in wills, trust, medical directives), insurance agents, associates pastors, counselors, legal aides, teachers, preachers, seminary admissions counselors, and claims representatives for insurance companies. Many of the professionals agreed to be a part of this process and were more than willing to share with the women. However, when it was time to commit to firm dates and times, many declined due to schedule conflicts or personal issues. To continue the project, I utilize the county, local community college and seminary libraries to research the topics and share with the women significant information on the topic discussed.

### *The Project*

An informational symposium was held at SPBC leadership conference at the Creighton (main) location and led by me. This session was held to inform and recruit participants. This writer was given an opportunity in the conference to share the intricate details of the project and to recruit women working in ministry at SPBC. The note placed in the bulletin had initiated and prompted a few women to inquire prior to this event. This writer had an opportunity to fellowship and answer questions from the women during lunch prior to leaving the event.

The first symposium, “The Essentials of a Prayer Life,” was held at the SPBC Belt location and led by me (See Appendix B). Participants were reminded prior to the event via email and in person of the event’s date, time and topic. I found out later two ladies from out of state attempted to attend the event; however, they mistakenly went to the SPBC main location. This event was held; it yielded only one participant. This particular woman’s mother died several weeks prior to the event. She brought her mother’s Bible with her. The scriptures shared with her (with the exception of one) at this event were the same scriptures her mother outlined in the Bible. Even though I was initially disappointed with the fact that only one participant showed up for the event, I was pleased to see this one received encouragement and comfort in God’s word for “such a time as this.”<sup>7</sup> During the symposium we discussed the purpose and reasoning for being prayerful women serving God. We further discussed why prayer is essential, humbling and requires us to yield our concerns before a yielding God. We examined and discussed the following scriptures: Ephesians 6:10-18; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Luke 4:42; 11:13;

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<sup>7</sup> Esther 4:14, NIV.

Matthew 6:5-13; Job 1:6-12; Revelation 12:10 and Deuteronomy 29:29. In addition, we shared our favorite place to pray, timeframe, making prayer interesting, gratitude list, favorite scripture, God's answer to prayer, and waiting on God to answer prayer. Moreover, we shared the need for prayerful friends. We addressed the following question: "Can God be your God even if he does not answer your prayer?" We concluded with the following statement: "Pray to God with Great Expectation and Remain Open to Great Possibilities." We prayed and concluded the program.

The second symposium was held at the Westerre Conference Center. The topic was "One System of Care Retreat" (See Appendix C). I led this session and aligned it with SPBC's One System Care Retreat. The conference shared the need for self-care and care of the congregants. My pastor advised one of the associate pastors of my presentation and asked that the male leaders leave the room for lunch so that I could engage the women. I shared the doctoral project and each symposium in detail and reiterated the purpose of the project, the significance of each woman serving in ministry and the project dates and time frames. The women seem genuinely interested and actively participated in further discussion with me during lunch and throughout the day. This took place less than twenty-four hours after returning from an Intensive week at United Theological Seminary. I cleared my calendar and made myself available to further substantiate and process the purpose of my doctoral project. The pre-test surveys were given to the participants. There were forty-five pre-test surveys given to the participants; however, the context associates collected thirty-one surveys.

The third symposium, "Domestic Violence," was held at the SPBC Belt location (See Appendix D). Reverend J. led this session. She shared a personal account of

domestic violence in her life while serving in ministry. In addition, she shared how she suffered in silence and how those with whom she worked closely in the church did not know of her pain. She utilized a variety of visual prompts, handouts and musical illustrations throughout her presentation. At times the room was quiet as she eloquently shared how a woman can easily find herself entrapped in a domestic situation while serving faithfully at her place of worship at the church. The women were engaged and asked a variety of questions. Rev. J. shared a booklet with phone number for victims of domestic violence in different localities and states. The women talked with her during, and after this session.

Rev. J shared in detail the many reason women enter into relationships such as financial support, out of their loneliness and sometimes being lured. In addition, she shared tools for faith leaders to utilize and empower victims of domestic violence. These tools vary from providing access to community resources such as the crisis line and domestic abuse programs, helping the victim prepare a plan of escape and locate a safe place to stay, respecting the victim's autonomy acknowledging she is the expert in her life, acknowledging the violence injustice against her is not her fault, believing and validating her experiences and respecting her confidentiality. This information was shared by Rev. J. from the "Support from Parish Team Wheel," developed by Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Green Bay, based on the "Medical Power and Control Wheel," developed by the Domestic Violence Project Inc., in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Moreover, she shared even though women are often mentioned as victims of domestic violence, there are men who are victims of domestic violence as well. It is important to note she encouraged the women to get in touch with their feelings and validate how they

feel on a routine basis. The women were engaged and asked a variety of questions. Rev. J. shared a booklet with phone number for victims of domestic violence in different localities and states. The women talked with her during, and after this session.

We concluded this session with prayer. This appeared to be an intense and necessary session. We unintentionally went beyond our designated time to accommodate the women.

The fourth symposium, “Life Insurance, Wills, Trust, Medical Directives and Finances,” was held at SPBC Belt location. Percy Barnett, a State Farm agent, and I led the session (See Appendix E). I placed the following disclaimer on the handout: “Mr. Barnett and I are not financial advisors nor attorneys. Please seek legal advice from someone of your choice in reference to your particular situation.” We open the session with prayer and started the session with the topic of “life insurance.” This session also seemed to captivate the attention of the participants. There was a lot of discussion around life insurance, wills and finances. Mr. Barnett gave the participants a visual of the different types of life insurance. He discussed in great detail the need for life insurance along with the monetary cost of term and whole life insurance based on the age and health of the individual. The ladies shared in discussion the reason they did not have life insurance along with the advantages and disadvantages of having insurance. Some participants gave personal accounts of the burden of paying for the funeral services and health care of family members without insurance. Mr. Barnett gave the women several handouts and trinkets. He opened the session for a question and answer period. I believe the insurance agent enjoyed the session as much as the women. The women were given a variety of resources to read and utilize at a more convenient time for them.



I led the wills, trust, medical directives, and finance part of the session. In hindsight, this should have been a much longer session. The life insurance portion utilized most of the session. The women were engaged in the wills, trust, medical directives, and Roth IRA session. They seem to be a bit more relaxed and talkative. I shared several resources and passed around several books listed on the handout. We had a great discussion around our finances and went beyond our scheduled time frame. The context associates handed out the post-test surveys and we concluded the session with prayer.

### *Analysis of Data*

The data was collected at the symposiums utilizing the pre-and post-test surveys. Those in attendance at the “One System Care Retreat” filled out the pre-test surveys. Forty-five pre-test surveys were disbursed and thirty-one were returned. Fourteen participants did not return the surveys for unknown reasons. The post-test surveys were given out at the end of the fourth seminar. Seven post-test surveys were disbursed to those in attendance and seven were collected. There were many stray marks and more than one answer checked per question on the surveys. Many participants chose to check the “neutral” and “not applicable” as an answer to the questions on the survey. Many of the surveys cause me to wonder if the women were as uncomfortable as I was initially in identifying problems at my place of worship.

Below are the answer categories (Strongly-Agree- 7; Agree- 15; I am neutral- 4; Disagree- 5; Strongly Disagree-0; N/A-0).

- Women serving in ministry are often hurt by other women serving in the church.

- Women serving in ministry are often hurt by leadership in the church.
- As a woman serving in ministry, I need mentoring.
- SPBC provides me with classes uniquely related to my issues as a woman.
- We have a women's ministry in the church which supports and encourages me.
- I am coached and encouraged to utilize my spiritual gifts in the church.

I need more guidance in the church as a woman (Never - 3; Rarely- 6; Sometimes- 16; A Lot- 4).

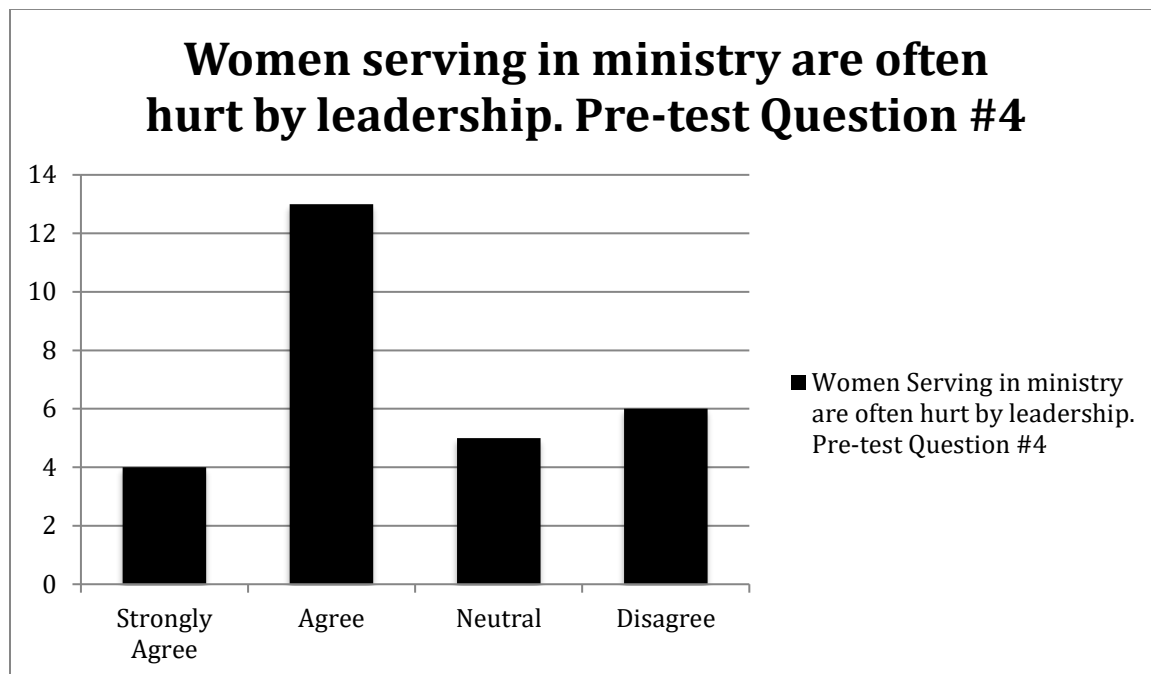
Example below are questions from the post-test survey. These are the answer categories (Strongly-Agree- 3; Agree- 2; I am neutral- 0; Disagree- 2; Strongly Disagree- 0; N/A-0).

- Women serving in ministry are often hurt by leadership in the church.
- The leadership of the church nurtures women serving in ministry.
- I am coached and empowered to utilize my spiritual gifts in the church.
- A mentor is needed for woman serving in ministry at SPBC.
- The SPBC is a safe place for me to share my challenges and pain.

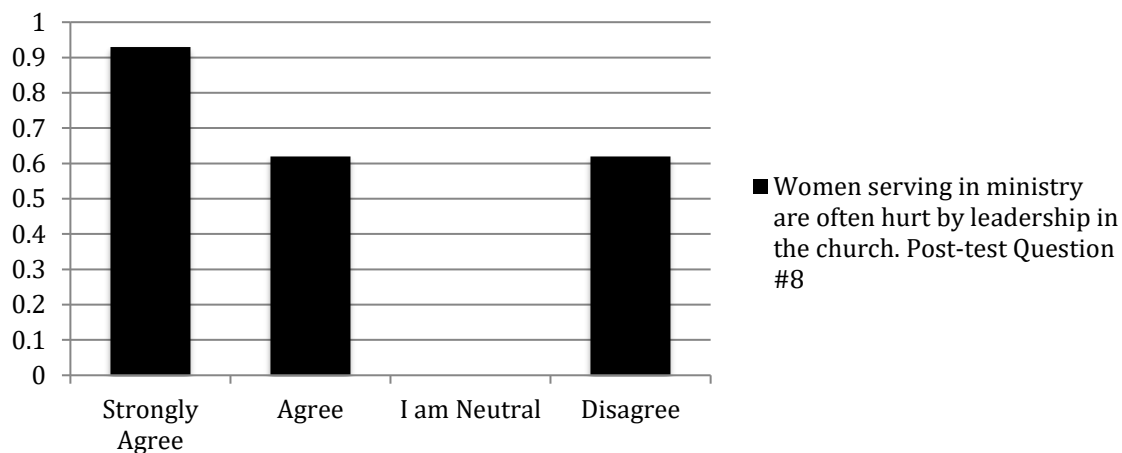
I need more guidance in the church as a woman. (Never- 1; Rarely- 1; Sometimes- 3; A Lot- 2).

The pre- and post-test surveys yielded similar information and represent small samples taken from the population of women servants at SPBC. The information from the surveys revealed women at SPBC are pleased with their spiritual foundation. Yet, many seem to want mentoring, a safe place to share their pain and struggles, teachings which encourage women to help each other versus hurting each other and more encouragement and guidance from leadership. The women involved in the pre-test and post-test survey

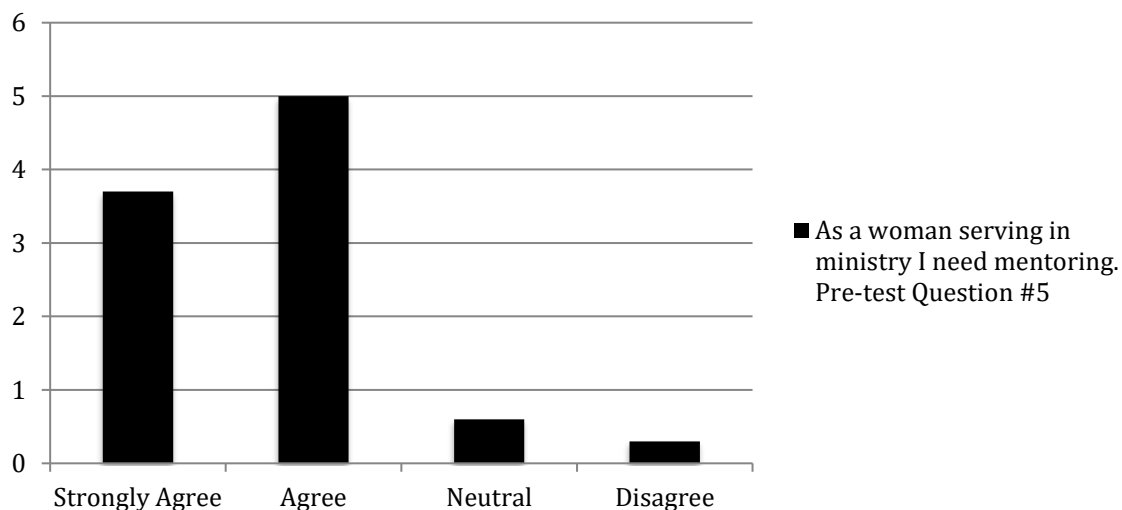
were not the same women with the exception of two women. The number of women participating was drastically different, yet many of the questions were answered in the same manner. Moreover, the data collected was limited to the women serving in ministry within the scope of Saint Paul's Baptist Church. The charts that follow offers some statistical data that was gleaned from the surveys.

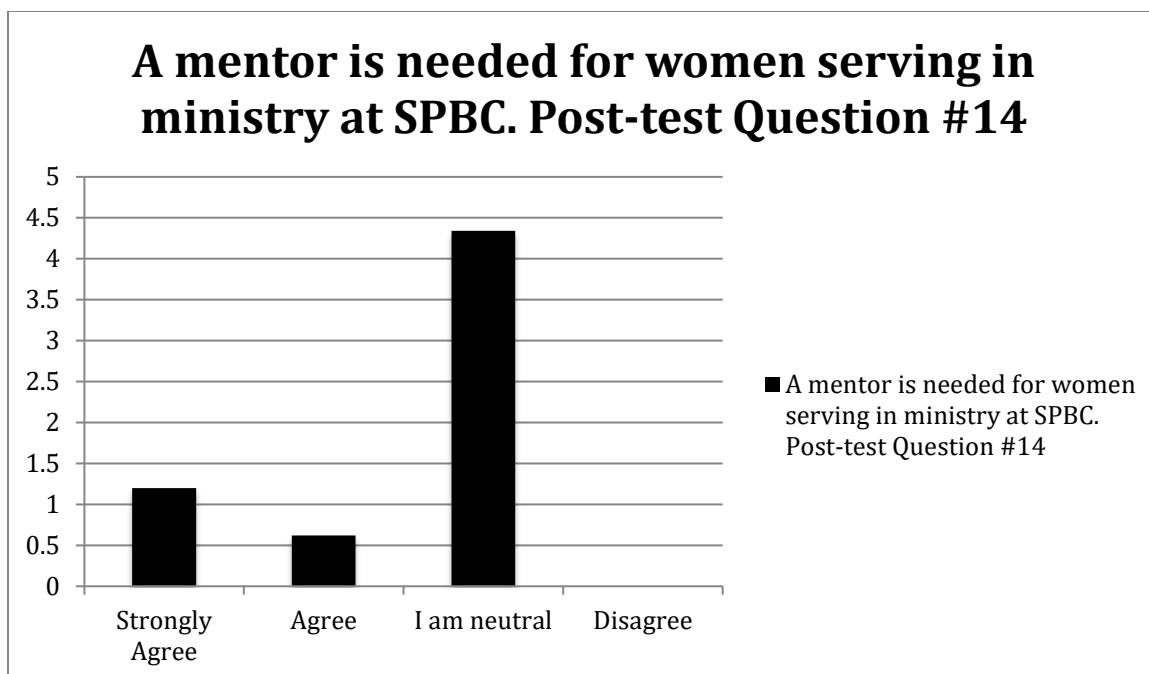


### **Women serving in ministry are often hurt by leadership in the church. Post-test Question #8**



### **As a woman serving in ministry I need mentoring. Pre-test Question #5**





### *Outcome*

The women who participated in the study had a variety of education. Collectively, in the pre- and post-test survey questions, all participants had the following: some college, college graduate, and post college graduate education. I also observed while in attendance of the symposiums and gleaned from the data collected that women were engaged and needed more of these types of sessions. They were amiable to symposiums which are accessible and unique to women. I am concerned with the women who answered the survey indicating their hurt from other women and leadership in the church. It is important to note some responses the participants gave indicated they were not hurt as well. Yet, those that are hurt while serving in ministry indicated there is a need to support, nurture and mentor the women serving in ministry at SPBC.

### **Summary of Learning**

The results of this study provided me with new insights to the complexity of SPBC and the challenges of meeting the needs of the women with a church in three separate locations. The leadership needs, in many cases, prevailed in the surveys as well as the needs of the women serving that were not in leadership roles. Simply stated, the women had needs throughout the church regardless of their roles in the church. There seem to be reluctance or a hesitance in answering the questions on the surveys. Therefore, many questions were not answered and many participants decided to check the “I am neutral box.” It was difficult to navigate the terrain of SPBC even as a member of many years. It was also a challenge to motivate the women to try exploring something new and different. I found some people to be helpful and some to be a hindrance to the process. Others were committed and became less committed throughout the process. In addition, the survey revealed many women were pleased with their spiritual formation and stated a women’s ministry existed. However, the same women participants stated they needed guidance in the church. It is my hope that the results of this study/project will provide the groundwork for future projects and symposiums at SPBC and other places where ministry takes place.

### *Suggested Improvements for Future Projects*

The project was an enormous endeavor to pursue. It was a bigger task and required more work than could be anticipated at a church such as SPBC. In hindsight, I would have implemented this project with a few changes. One of the main things I would do differently is target one location of SPBC and literally planned to be on the church’s

calendar a year in advance. I would, if possible, ask my pastor for a team (two to four) of his staff members that could be committed to the process and target people to contact to streamline the communication between SPBC and me. In addition, I would invite a core group of women to commit to the process in addition to my context associates. The core group of women would have been selected from one location of SPBC. The sample population would have consisted of ten or fifteen women and the targeted audience would have been women ministers. Each location of SPBC presented different challenges and needs in ministry. The topics chosen were necessary and informative, yet they were too numerous and intense for the timeframe of the project. Future symposiums should focus on one theme and topic related to the overall theme. Moreover, I would work closely with this group to find out their needs and desires in ministry and then proceed with the symposiums.

#### *Recommendations for Further Research*

The symposiums revealed, in my observations of the women interacting during the sessions, a need for further research for different types of symposiums to meet the needs of the women serving in the church.

1. Mentoring for young adult women in the church.
2. Mentoring for single women in the church.

#### **Conclusion**

This project was an informative, intriguing and a personal experience for the women as well as this author. This research project was well planned, detailed,

prayerfully prepared, and goal oriented. However, there were obstacles and unseen circumstances along the journey. When preparing for an event at Saint Paul's Baptist Church in the past, I had an army of people in which I worked with behind the scenes. There were numerous meetings held a year prior to the event along with resources, volunteers, paid staff, support and input from the leadership at SPBC. As a doctoral student, I did not have the army of people, resources, timeframe and support needed. Actually, I did not think there would be so many challenges from implementation to sustaining the momentum of the project. At times, I felt like an outside vendor even though I am a member with over twenty-nine years of service at a church with over eleven thousand members. I am overjoyed and not surprised to see the survey findings revealed there are women at SPBC that feel their spiritual needs are being met. We have a dynamic pastor who preaches the word of God; therefore, spiritually we are fed. Moreover, I was not surprised and am increasingly concerned about those who needed guidance, mentoring and a safe place to share their concerns. This research project barely touched the surface of empowering those women who need more from the church. The few women who attended the sessions stepped out of their comfort zone to expose themselves to other women and new ideas. Even though I had an expectation for a larger group of women to be in attendance, I was grateful for those who participated in the research project. I observed their faces and interest in the information shared. I listened to their discussions and the respect they showed to one another. I was pleasantly pleased in the way they showed empathy and sympathy as they shared personal information about their lives. I believed we walked away with new ideas, informed and a positive rapport for one another. However, it is my premonition that we left each other with questions we



did not ask, fears we did not share, struggles we did not share and concerns about the ministry God has given, still without direction. The work with women in the church is not completed in the time constraints of a doctoral project. There is still work to be done. More importantly, I am grateful that the work has begun through the opportunity given in the doctoral program at United Theological Seminary.

It is my belief this project is the groundwork for a nonprofit organization (501c3) to be utilized in churches and communities across faiths and cultures. My research of women serving in ministry across different faiths in many instances revealed the domestication and failure to recognize the skills, talents and leadership of women. Utilizing this project model in a non-profit organization will empower women and ultimately cause them to be more effective in serving God.

It is impossible to conclude this chapter without sharing the impact of the plenaries and the interim focus sessions as well as my three-year doctoral journey. The plenaries during my three-year journey offered me a place to worship, reflect and search for my place in ministry. It often gave me an opportunity to shift my thoughts from my place of employment and the task of research to contemplate my station in ministry as a woman servant of the most high God. In addition, I was given a rare opportunity into the lives and intricate details of struggles and joys of the lives of the presenters. Many times, the plenaries gave me an opportunity and safe place to evaluate my thoughts, fears, anger and discontentment with the woes of ministry and the condition of the state of our humanity in the world. The plenaries were designed to unapologetically confront the issues of race, injustice and the mediocracy in serving in ministry. I was often encouraged to examine myself as I examined the task of the ministry awaiting me in the world.

My interim focus group sessions impact on my life provided an overwhelmingly, emotionally fused place of safety, unity, belonging, respect and love for the wellbeing of each member. It gave me an uncommon reflection of the trials, struggles and joys of others serving in ministry, both male and female. Often our focus groups were sessions where we were able to cry, share our deepest pain as we worship God and continue with the task of the doctoral journey. I know we will somehow stay connected long after our doctoral journey ends and a new journey begin. I believe even now as I write there are colleagues from my focus group who have completed this journey praying for the rest of us on this journey because of the bond, love and respect we have for each other. Our mentors, Dr. Kenneth Cummings and Dr. Robert Walker, fostered an environment of worship to God, respect and genuine care for each other and a serious focus on the doctoral journey. They provided an unbelievable sense of family, safety, and a nurturing environment for every member of the group. We were encouraged to show up and look forward to the fellowship of our focus group even when we did not feel adequate within our work or selves. We were encouraged to own our shortcomings, strengths and ministry gifts.

Through the long nights of writing and long weeks of research, this doctoral journey was made worthwhile with the support and encouragement of an army of people including my mentors and peers. I learned more about myself within my focus group and through perseverance in my research than I can recall during my matriculation of other degrees. This doctoral journey was an inward journey to who I am, what I believe, my truth, both good and bad, and my ability to endure. During this journey, I have had my low and high moments. At one point, I accidentally felled in love with the research and

often found myself reading the research books for pleasure instead of writing. I have learned the significance of being flexible, open minded and prioritizing. I have learned the difficult task of being at peace when I had to say “no” to engagements, people and events for this season of my doctoral journey. In addition, this writer learned the hard task of asking for help, clarity and using an outline for everything. My doctoral journey has been an amazing experience. I have thrived in a diverse community and experienced the tremendous lives of others and found my strength in times of exhaustion in God. All of the changes in my life have not been revealed to me at this moment on the journey; however, I know I am a different woman than the woman which started this journey. Moreover, I learned by faith God will send people, resources, and strength to endure when he sends you to do a task for him. Words are merely a reflection of the totality of my experience of this unbelievable doctoral journey at United Theological Seminary. I am grateful for the opportunity and God’s grace and mercy!

## **APPENDIX A**

### **SYMPOSIUM FLYER: WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE**

**A DOCTORAL PROJECT**

**THE WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE:  
CONNECTING WOMEN IN MINISTRY THROUGH  
MENTORING, NETWORKING AND SPIRITUAL  
FORMATION  
AT SAINT PAUL'S BAPTIST CHURCH**

**SYMPOSIUM**

**MAY 14, 21, 28, AND JUNE 4,  
2016**

**LOCATION- SPBC BELT CAMPUS 700 EAST BELT  
BLVD. RICHMOND VA 23224**

**(EXCEPT MAY 21 SYMPOSIUM LOCATION  
WESTERRE CONFERENCE CENTER 3831  
WESTERRE PARKWAY HENRICO, VA 23233  
8:00AM-5:00PM)**

**TIME- 9:30AM-12:00PM**

**THE IS A FREE EVENT AND OPEN TO WOMEN  
SERVING IN MINISTRY AT SPBC  
(QUESTIONS: CONTACT REV. MARY E. COSBY  
cosbyme@verizon.net)**

## **APPENDIX B**

### **THE ESSENTIALS OF A PRAYER LIFE**

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE: CONNECTING WOMEN IN MINISTRY  
THROUGH MENTORING, NETWORKING, AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION

AT SPBC

May 14, 2016

THE ESSENTIALS OF A PRAYER LIFE

Saint Paul's Baptist Church: Prayer is Essential (for life and while serving in ministry).

Opening-Prayer

Discussion in reference to "What is prayer?"

Prayer is personal: it is between you and GOD

To live life well/successfully: you must pray

To serve God: prayer is essential

To work in ministry: prayer is essential

Prayer is essential like the air you breathe

You must yield yourself to God

You must humble yourself and be honest with God

Be honest with God

Discussion in reference to the following scriptures:

Ephesians 6:10-18; Ephesians 6:12

I Thessalonians 5:17 – (KJV) pray without ceasing

Luke 4:42; Luke 11:13

Matthew 6:5-13 - focus text (6:6)

The enemy - Job 1:6-12

Revelation 12:10

Where do you pray?

You need at least a place to pray and can pray anywhere.

Do you have a time frame to pray?

How to make prayer interesting?

Worship, Gratitude list: Read other religious material/positive material in addition to your Bible

Find a favorite Scripture

Can you accept God's answer to prayer?

While waiting for God to answer prayer, keep moving forward. Prayer is not a stagnant or stationary position.

Allow God to be God in your life

Can God be your God even if he does not answer your prayer?

Deuteronomy 29:29 - revealed

Prayerful friends pray

Be careful of who you ask to pray for you: Ezekiel 8:9-18

Pray to God with great expectation and remain open to great possibilities.



## **APPENDIX C**

### **ONE SYSTEM CARE RETREAT**

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE: CONNECTING WOMEN IN MINISTRY  
THROUGH MENTORING, NETWORKING, AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION

AT SPBC

May 21, 2016

One System Care Retreat

This symposium was held at the Westerre Conference Center. The topic was the "One System of Care Retreat." I led this session and aligned it with SPBC's One System Care Retreat. The conference shared the need for self-care and care of the congregants. I shared the doctoral project and each symposium in detailed and reiterated the purpose of the project, the significance of each woman serving in ministry and the project dates and time frames. This was an additional session utilized to inform, encourage and recruit the women to participate in the doctoral project. The women seem genuinely interested and actively participated in further discussion with me during lunch and throughout the day. The pre-test surveys were given to the participants. There were forty-five pre-test surveys given to the participants; however, the context associates collected thirty-one surveys.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RETREAT**

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE: CONNECTING WOMEN IN  
MINISTRY THROUGH MENTORING, NETWORKING, AND SPIRITUAL  
FORMATION AT SPBC

May 28, 2016

Domestic Violence Issues amongst Women in the Church

Opening - Prayer

Introduction of Rev. J

Music presentation

Presentation: "A Personal Account of Domestic Violence While Serving in the Church."

Group Discussion

Physical Violence, Sexual Violence and Mental Abuse

Domestic Abuse Intervention Project: [www.duluth-model.org](http://www.duluth-model.org)

Review informational packets

Phone numbers were given and handouts were given that help guide faith leaders and religious communities in their work with battered women on how to recognize abuse and self-esteem.

The third symposium was held at SPBC Belt location. The topic was "Domestic Violence." I led this session and was assisted by Rev. J. She gave a personal account of domestic violence in her life. She utilized a variety of visual prompts, handouts and musical illustrations throughout her presentation. The women were engaged and asked a variety of questions. This appeared to be an intense and necessary session. We unintentionally went beyond our designated time to accommodate the women.

## **APPENDIX E**

### **WILLS, TRUST, LIFE INSURANCE, MEDICAL DIRECTIVES AND FINANCES**

The Women's Empowerment Initiative: Connecting Women in Ministry Through  
Mentoring, Networking, and Spiritual Formation at Saint Paul's Baptist Church  
June 4, 2016

Wills, Trust, Life Insurance, Medical Directives and Finances

Life Insurance – “Term or Whole Life” - Percy Barnett, Jr.  
Questions and Answers

“Wills/Trust” - Rev. Mary E. Cosby

The Health Care Proxy/Medical Directive

Roth IRA/Roth IRA for Children - [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)

VA 529 College Savings Plan - [www.virginia529.com](http://www.virginia529.com)

Questions and Answers

Resources:

*Your Money and Your Man - How You and Prince Charming Can Spend Well and Live Rich* – by Michelle Singletary

*5 @ 55 The 5 Essential Legal Documents You Need by age 55* - by Judith D. Grimaldi, Esq. & Joanne Seminara, Esq. with Pierre A. Lehu

*The Kid's ROTH IRA Handbook: Securing Tax-Free Wealth From a Child's First Paycheck* by Tracy Foote

*Estate Planning Made Easy*, 3rd edition, - by David T. Phillips and Bill S. Wolfkiel

The topics discussed are below:

- “The Ten Most Common Mistakes and How to Avoid Them”
- “The Real Impact Recent Legislation Will Have on Your Estate”
- “New Strategies to Avoid Creditors, Predators, and the IRS”

*The 9 Steps to Financial Freedom: Practical & Spiritual Steps So You Can Stop Worrying*,  
by Suze Orman

*The Laws of Money, The Lessons of Life: Keep What You Have and Create What You Deserve*, by Suze Orman

*The 21-Day Financial Fast* by Michelle Singletary, [www.michellesingletary.com](http://www.michellesingletary.com)

Crown Financial Ministries - [www.crown.org](http://www.crown.org)

(Disclaimer: Mr. Barnett and I are not financial advisors nor are we attorneys. Please seek legal advice from someone of your choice in reference to your particular situation).

**APPENDIX F**  
**PRE TEST SURVEY**



Pre Test Survey						
	Strongly Agree	Agree	I am Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
1. Women serving in ministry are nurtured by the leadership of the church.						
2. Women serving in ministry are respected by the leadership of the church.						
3. Women serving in ministry are often hurt by other women serving in the church.						
	Strongly Agree	Agree	I am Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
4. Women serving in ministry are often hurt by leadership in the church.						
5. As a woman serving in ministry, I need mentoring.						
6. My spiritual needs are being meet at SPBC.						
7. SPBC provides me with classes uniquely related to my issues as a woman.						
8. When I have problems in my marriage, I can get help and support at SPBC.						

9. I am advised in the church of domestic violence issues unique to women.						
10. I am encouraged to serve in leadership positions in the church.						

	Strongly Agree	Agree	I am Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
11. We have a women’s ministry in the church which supports and encourages me.						
12. I feel lost as a woman in SPBC.						
13. I am coached and encourage to utilize my spiritual gifts in the church.						
14. I do not know how to identify my spiritual gifts in the church.						
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
15. The SPBC is a safe place for me to share my challenges and pain.						
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	A Lot		
16. I need more guidance in the church as a woman.						
	Yes	No				
17. I feel lost in a church with over 11,000 members.						

	I am Male	I am Female				
18. Gender						
19. Race/Ethnicity	African American (non-Hispanic)	Hispanic (non-White)	White (non-Hispanic)	Other		
	Less than high school	Some high school	High school graduate	Some college	College graduate	Post college graduate
19. Education						
	Yes	No				
20. Are there children under age 18 in your household?						

**APPENDIX G**  
**POST TEST SURVEY**

Post Test Survey						
	Strongly Agree	Agree	I am Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
21. Were these sessions helpful to you?						
22. I am more excited about ministry now than I was three months ago?						
23. As a woman serving in ministry, I need more sessions such as these to help me grow in ministry.						
24. Are you more interested in the development and success of women in ministry at SPBC after attending these sessions?						
25. Women serving in ministry are often hurt by other women serving in the church. Therefore, women need sessions such as these to assist them.						
26. Are you more committed to the development and success of women in ministry at SPBC after attending these sessions?						
27. SPBC provides me with sessions such as these which are uniquely related to my issues as a woman.						

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>I am Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
28. Women serving in ministry are often hurt by leadership in the church.						
29. I am advised in the church of domestic violence issues unique to women.						
30. The leadership of the church nurtures women serving in ministry.						

31. We have a women’s ministry in the church which supports and encourages me.						
32. I do not feel lost as a woman in ministry at SPBC.						
33. I am coached and empowered to utilize my spiritual gifts in the church.						
34. A mentor is needed for women serving in ministry at SPBC.						
35. The SPBC is a safe place for me to share my challenges and pain.						
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	A Lot		
36. I need more guidance in the church as a woman.						
17. I feel lost in a church with over 11,000 members.	Yes	No				

	Male	Female	N/A			
18. What is the gender of your mentor?						
	African American (non-Hispanic)	Hispanic (non-White)	White (non-Hispanic)	Other		
19. Race/Ethnicity						
	Less than high school	Some high school	High school graduate	Some college	College graduate	Post college graduate
20. Education						
	Yes	No				
21. Are you less committed to the development and success of women in ministry than you were three months ago?						

**APPENDIX H**  
**PRE TEST SURVEY RESULTS**



Women Empowerment Initiative: Connecting Women in Ministry through Mentoring,  
Networking and Spiritual Formation at Saint Paul's Baptist Church  
Pre-Test Survey Results  
June 26, 2016

1. Women serving in ministry are nurtured by the leadership of the church.  
Strongly Agree - 2; Agree - 17; I am neutral - 2; Disagree - 9; Strongly Disagree -1; N/A - 0.
2. Women serving in ministry are respected by the leadership of the church.  
Strongly Agree - 6; Agree - 17; I am neutral - 4; Disagree - 3; Strongly Disagree -0; N/A- 0.
3. Women serving in ministry are often hurt by other women serving in the church.  
Strongly Agree - 7; Agree - 15; I am neutral - 4; Disagree - 5; Strongly Disagree -0; N/A- 0.
4. Women serving in ministry are often hurt by leadership in the church.  
Strongly Agree - 4; Agree - 13; I am neutral -5; Disagree - 6; Strongly Disagree -0; N/A- 0.
5. As a woman serving in ministry I need mentoring.  
Strongly Agree - 12; Agree - 16; I am neutral - 2; Disagree - 1; Strongly Disagree -0; N/A- 0.
6. My spiritual needs are being met at SPBC.  
Strongly Agree - 10; Agree - 12; I am neutral - 4; Disagree - 5; Strongly Disagree -1; N/A- 0.
7. SPBC provides me with classes uniquely related to my issues as a woman.  
Strongly Agree - 1; Agree - 12; I am neutral- 1; Disagree - 13; Strongly Disagree -4; N/A- 0.
8. When I have problems in my marriage, I can get help and support at SPBC?  
Strongly Agree - 0; Agree - 9; I am neutral - 4; Disagree - 2; Strongly Disagree -2; N/A - 15.
9. I am advised in the church of domestic violence issues.  
Strongly Agree - 0; Agree - 9; I am neutral - 1; Disagree - 10; Strongly Disagree -2; N/A- 6.
10. I am encouraged to serve in leadership positions in the church.  
Strongly Agree - 12; Agree - 12; I am neutral - 5; Disagree - 0; Strongly Disagree -1; N/A- 1.
11. We have a women's ministry in the church which supports and encourages me.

Strongly Agree - 7; Agree - 13; I am neutral- 4; Disagree - 4; Strongly Disagree - 3; N/A- 1.

12. I feel lost as a woman in SPBC.

Strongly Agree -0; Agree - 3; I am neutral - 4; Disagree - 10; Strongly Disagree - 11; N/A- 3.

13. I am coached and encouraged to utilize my spiritual gifts in the church.

Strongly Agree -9; Agree - 9; I am neutral - 5; Disagree - 5; Strongly Disagree - 1; N/A – 0.

14. I do not know how to identify my spiritual gifts in the church.

Strongly Agree - 0; Agree - 2; I am neutral - 1; Disagree - 12; Strongly Disagree - 14; N/A- 2.

15. The SPBC is a safe place for me to share my challenges and pain.

Strongly Agree-5; Agree - 15; Disagree - 6; Strongly Disagree – 3.

16. I need more guidance in the church as a woman.

Never - 3; Rarely - 6; Sometimes - 16; A Lot – 4.

17. I feel lost in a church with over 11, 000 members.

Yes - 4; No- 27.

18. Gender - 31 Female Participants.

19. Race/Ethnicity.

African American (non-Hispanic) - 25; Hispanic (non-White) - 0; Other-0.

20. Education.

Less than High School - 0; Some High School - 0; High School Graduate - 0; Some College - 7; College Graduate -5; Post College Graduate – 16.

**APPENDIX I**  
**POST TEST SURVEY RESULTS**

Women Empowerment Initiative: Connecting Women in Ministry through Mentoring,  
Networking and Spiritual Formation at Saint Paul's Baptist Church  
Post-Test Survey Results  
June 4, 2016

1. Were these sessions helpful to you?

Strongly Agree - 3; Agree - 4; I am neutral - 0; Disagree - 0; Strongly Disagree - 0; N/A - 0.

2. I am more excited about ministry now than I was three months ago.

Strongly Agree - 1; Agree - 5; I am neutral - 1; Disagree - 0; Strongly Disagree - 0; N/A - 0.

3. As a woman serving in ministry I need more sessions such as these to help me grow in ministry.

Strongly Agree - 3; Agree - 4; I am neutral - 0; Disagree - 0; Strongly Disagree - 0; N/A - 0.

4. I am more interested in the development and success of women in ministry at SPBC after attending these sessions?

Strongly Agree - 1; Agree - 5; I am neutral - 1; Disagree - 0; Strongly Disagree - 0; N/A - 0.

5. Women serving in ministry are often hurt by other women serving in the church. Therefore, women need sessions such as these to assist them.

Strongly Agree - 3; Agree - 2; I am neutral - 1; Disagree - 0; Strongly Disagree - 0; N/A - 1.

6. Are you more committed to the development and success of women in ministry at SPBC after attending these sessions?

Strongly Agree - 1; Agree - 5; I am neutral - 0; Disagree - 0; Strongly Disagree - 0; N/A - 1.

7. SPBC provides me with sessions such as these which are uniquely related to my issues as a woman.

Strongly Agree - 3; Agree - 4; I am neutral - 0; Disagree - 0; Strongly Disagree - 0; N/A - 0.

8. Women serving in ministry are often hurt by leadership in the church.

Strongly Agree - 3; Agree - 2; I am neutral - 0; Disagree - 2; Strongly Disagree - 0; N/A - 0.

9. I am advised in the church of domestic violence issues unique to women.

Strongly Agree - 1; Agree - 2; I am neutral - 3; Disagree - 1; Strongly Disagree - 0; N/A - 0.

10. The leadership of the church nurtures women serving in ministry.

Strongly Agree - 0; Agree - 4; I am neutral - 1; Disagree - 2; Strongly Disagree - 0; N/A - 0.

11. We have a women's ministry in the church which supports and encourage me.

Strongly Agree - 0; Agree - 5; I am neutral - 2; Disagree - 0; Strongly Disagree - 0; N/A - 0.

12. I do not feel lost as a woman in ministry at SPBC.

Strongly Agree - 1; Agree - 3; I am neutral - 2; Disagree - 1; Strongly Disagree - 0; N/A - 0.

13. I am coached and empowered to utilize my spiritual gifts in the church.

Strongly Agree 2; Agree - 3; I am neutral - 2; Disagree - 0; Strongly Disagree - 0; N/A - 0.

14. A mentor is needed for women serving in ministry at SPBC.

Strongly Agree - 4; Agree - 2; I am neutral - 1; Disagree - 0; Strongly Disagree - 0; N/A - 0.

15. The SPBC is a safe place for me to share my challenges and pain.

Strongly Agree - 1; Agree - 3; Disagree - 2; Strongly Disagree - 1.

16. I need more guidance in the church as a woman.

Never - 1; Rarely - 1; Sometimes - 3; A Lot - 2.

17. I feel lost in a church with over 11, 000 members.

Yes - 4; No - 3.

18. What is the gender of your mentor?

Male - 1; Female - 12.

19. Race/Ethnicity

African American (non-Hispanic) - 5; Hispanic (non-White) - 0; Other - 0.

20. Education

Less than High School - 0; Some High School - 0; High School Graduate - 0;  
Some College - 3; College Graduate - 1; Post College Graduate - 3.

21. Are you less committed to the development and success of women in ministry than you were three months ago?

Yes - 0; No - 6.

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